

WILLIAM THORNBOROUGH,

T H E

BENEVOLENT QUIXOTE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

There, to the sympathetic heart
Life's best delights belong;
To mitigate the mourner's smart,
To guard the weak from wrong.
Ye sons of luxury, be wise;
Know, happiness for ever flies
The cold and solitary breast;
Then let the social instinct glow,
And learn to feel another's woe,
And in his joy be blest.

BEATTIE.

L O N D O N:

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T H E

BENEVOLENT QUIXOTE.

C H A P. I.

WHEN our hero left Mr. Barrymore's, he went directly to the theatre. The play was already begun; and, without asking any questions, he paid for his admittance, and took his seat in one of the boxes. The house was very full, and, the first act being just ended, the music was playing; but when the second began, he was astonished to find, instead of Venice Preserved, they were

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play-

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playing Love in a Village. He sat for some time with tolerable patience, expecting to see miss Darley every moment; but the second act being finished, he addressed an elderly gentleman who sat near him, and begged to know if he could inform him why the new actresses did not appear, and why the play was changed.

“The sudden illness of Jaffier was the reason of the alteration,” replied the gentleman; “and as the new performer excels in tragedy, I am told she will of course make her first appearance in that line.”

This satisfied him, and he began to think of returning to Mr. Barrymore’s,
when

when two ladies, who sat before him, attracted his attention: indeed, the different modes of their dress, manner, and conversation, gave to one of his contemplative turn of mind sufficient scope for meditation.

The elder seemed to be turned of seventy, but had still a fair and fresh complexion, with a serenity and good humour in her countenance, which evinced the turn of her mind. Unlike the present race of grandmothers, she adhered to the style of dress which rendered old ladies respectable some years since, but which is now usually given up for the gayer fashions. She was tall, slender, and extremely upright.

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A grey silk gown, black petticoat without a flounce, and a rich worked muslin apron and handkerchief; a lace cap, with a crimpl wire and white ribbands; a hood of the same under her chin, and her grey hair combed lightly and smoothly over a roll—This was her dress, and Mr. Thornborough was particularly struck by it; for he had not seen age make so respectable an appearance since his own grandmother, whom he but faintly remembered.

This lady's grand-daughter, who sat upon the seat before her, chatting to two gentlemen, was a perfect contrast: young, handsome, volatile, and adorned, as she thought, with a profusion of gauze and pink ribbands, she was equally

ly inattentive to the piece and her grandmother, whom she wholly neglected, and talked so loud to her beaux, that the poor old lady, who had placed her in front to give her an opportunity of making a conquest, was as much prevented from hearing, as from seeing by the height of her head. Happy, however, that her girl was noticed, she was almost indifferent about any thing else; when our hero, who had been early taught to reverence age whenever it appeared in a character worthy of reverence, and hurt by the neglect she experienced from her own party, addressed her with some trifling question relating to the actors, which introduced a conversation. When miss Warren observed this, she was not a little elated by the idea, that he could

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not have had any motive for this but the hope of engaging her in it; and suddenly turning round, she made some insipid remarks, which, as they were addressed to our hero, he could not help answering.

Miss Warren, though not absolutely out of the line, as it is called, was yet very inferior, both in birth and fortune, to the principal inhabitants of B——, though she visited many of them in a formal and distant manner. In one of the annual routs she had met both the gentlemen, who, as elegant and fashionable strangers, were the objects of general attention; and had not forgotten Mr. Thornborough, though she had been wholly unnoticed by him: and as
they

they did not play at the same table, he really did not remember her, even when (willing to keep up the acquaintance) she addressed him in the following manner.

“ I think, sir, I had the pleasure of meeting you lately at Mr. Hartley’s ?”

“ Madam, I beg pardon; I really did not recollect I had that honour.”

“ Oh pray, sir, make no apologies; I dare to say you did not, for I sat down to whist as soon as I entered the drawing-room, and was cut out but once the whole evening, and then you were talking to miss Barrymore. What

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a charm-

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a charming young woman that is! Is she not, sir?"

"Yes, madam, perfectly so indeed."

"I really should be glad to cultivate an intimacy with her; but I do not know how it is, I am so much engaged, I have not time to devote to those whose merits however deserve more attention than we pay to the general herd of our acquaintance: and then they are so little here; for you know, I suppose, they are generally in town in the winter: perhaps indeed you first knew them there?"

"No, I had not the pleasure of being intro-

introduced to them till my arrival at B——."

"Indeed! Well, that is surprising, they are so much in the world. And Mr. Wilding's family are vastly agreeable. Miss Wilding is a prodigious fine woman; and miss Charlotte, if she was not quite so grave, would be equally so."

Whilst she ran on in this manner, commending all his particular friends to ensure his approbation, her two beaux, perceiving themselves wholly neglected, began to be piqued; and Mr. Thornborough was as much wearied by her attentions as they were disgusted at her neglect. But their con-

versation was soon put an end to by an alarm of fire; and a thick smoke proceeding at the same instant from the stage, every one became anxious for their own safety; and the general confusion that reigned in the house can be better imagined than described.

As Mr. Thornborough sat near the door of the box which opened immediately to the lobby, he was in no danger: but as he never thought of himself only, he looked round to see whom he could assist; and leaving miss Warren to her beaux, he took the old lady in his arms, and bore her resolutely through the crowd into the streets, in spite of her screams and entreaties that he would quit her and return to Lucy: but he doubt-

ed not but Lucy was in good hands, and carried her till he came to a shop, which was not quite shut; and whilst endeavouring to open the door, he met Mr. Harrison, who was just set out in search of him; and seeing a female in his arms, and not knowing either the person or the accident which had happened, he began to rally him: but when the old lady was seated in a chair, and the people of the house were running to fetch drops and water, his mirth was absorbed in astonishment, and he only said: "Why, Mr. Godfrey, this is an unusual sort of Quixotism; you have been stealing old ladies instead of young ones." But his jest was scarcely heard, and not at all attended to by Mr. Thornborough: and when the object of his

care recovered sufficiently to speak, at her earnest entreaties he ran back to the theatre, to seek for her unhappy granddaughter, leaving her to the care of two women and Mr. Harrison, who staid behind with the hope of hearing how our hero had been disposed of during the evening, as he could not imagine it was an assignation with this lady which had induced him to leave Mr. Barrymore's with so little ceremony.

Mrs. Warren told the story of the fire; and upon Harrison's enquiring where she met her deliverer, replied, he had sat in the box near her the whole evening. This added to his perplexity. However, having learned all he could, and not willing to encounter the flames

flames himself, he ran back to Mr. Barrymore's, with the news that the theatre was half burnt down.

Sophia started from her chair, with a loud exclamation; then turning as pale as death, she sat down again: and another lady asked how he had heard it. His reply, that he had met Mr. Godfrey with a lady in his arms, relieved miss Barrymore's fears for his safety, but renewed her inquietude respecting the cause of his departure; but all her apprehensions vanished at once when Mr. Harrison continued:

“Faith, we were all out in our conjectures; for this fair lady, as no doubt you all imagine her to be, was no other
than

than old madam Warren; and she declared to me he had been sitting next her the whole evening: so for what purpose he ran away from hence is yet to be determined."

Sophia, though vexed at having betrayed so much concern, smiled at this speech; and her uncle replied: "The world could not in this instance accuse him of being a fortune-hunter, since it was well known Mrs. Warren had only a jointure, and that a very small one."

A good deal of ridiculous mirth, and many excellent jokes, as the speakers thought, passed at our hero's expence, who, in the mean time, returning to the playhouse, found the fire, which had been
only

only in a part of one of the scenes, was entirely extinguished, and the house was pretty well cleared. Not hearing any thing of miss Warren, he entered the box, and found her lying along the bottom in a fainting fit; and not willing to restore her to her grandmother in that condition, he summoned the actresses, and they soon restored her to sense and recollection. She then informed him, that one of the gentlemen who were sitting by her had left the house just before the alarm was given; and that, as he was carrying her grandmother out, the company in the next boxes on each side, thinking that was the best way, crowded so fast to the door, there was no possibility of her escaping; which the other gentleman perceiving, he abandoned her, and,
anxious

anxious only for his own safety, jumped down into the pit, which she was not able to do, and, as she supposed, got safe through the passage. In the mean time, terrified at being thus cruelly deserted, she screamed violently, but, in the confusion the whole house was then in, she screamed unheard and unnoticed; and at last, her terror rendering her incapable of making any exertions for herself, she sunk to the floor insensible.

Mr. Thornborough, when she had finished her little narrative, called a chair, and putting her in, walked before it to the house where her grandmother was anxiously waiting for her return; and having satisfied her she was well and unhurt, he saw her to their own house, and then

then came back for the old lady, whom he attended in the same manner; and having received their sincere and ardent thanks, he returned to his own lodgings, very well pleased with the events of the evening, as far as they related to himself; and in the reflection of having been serviceable to two defenceless women, he regretted not his own disappointment with respect to miss Darley.

CHAP.

C H A P. II.

ON his return to their lodgings, our hero found his friend arrived before him: he had spent the evening at Mr. Wilding's, and communicated to him the ill success he had met with in his first application; for the dislike Letitia had evinced for him did not prevent him from acquainting her with his passion. He added, as if in confidence, that upon telling her she would not have received a declaration from his friend so coldly, she was in so much confusion that he no longer doubted her regard.

“You are a happy man,” continued
he,

he, "to have so fine a young creature thus deeply attached to you, without appearing with any advantages of fortune or situation, and without taking any pains to engage her affections."

Mr. Thornborough acknowledged himself extremely fortunate, and said he only waited the lady's final determination, which, after all, might be in Godfrey's favour, before he would avail himself of her partiality.

When they parted for the night, the latter rejoiced in the fair prospect of executing all his plans, for the whole afternoon had been spent in contrivance, for which the absence of our hero and the illness of Charlotte, who was confined

finned with a cold, gave them the most favourable opportunity.

Mr. Thornborough's reflections were very different: flattered by miss Wilding's prepossession, and pleased by what he thought a proof of a generous and disinterested heart, which particularly suited the delicate and romantic turn of his mind, he yet felt no animation at the hope of calling her his. He admired her person, he esteemed her character, and was grateful for her attachment; but he returned it not with that ardour he thought almost essential to happiness. Miss Barrymore then started upon his mind, with all the advantages she possessed, of beauty, sense, and accomplishments; and he breathed a half-formed
with

wish that her sentiments for him were equally tender: but however this wish was gratified, he was unconscious of it; for Sophia, too sensible of her partiality, endeavoured to hide it by an assumed haughtiness, which he, a novice in the arts of her sex, had not vanity enough to suppose was the effects of a concealed passion.

He then considered what he had often been told, that happiness was more attainable when the affections were fixed upon a really amiable object, than when attracted by brilliancy or engaged by beauty. Convinced of the attachment of Letitia, and supposing, from the present conduct of Sophia, that, only by the disclosure of his name and fortune, he could have
any

any hopes of her, he determined to follow the path which lay before him, and seriously address the former; but as he was assured the two ladies would not bear comparison, in justice to his intended, he resolved to avoid miss Barrymore as much as possible.

In a few days miss Darley's appearance was again announced in the play-bills, and Mr. Thornborough determined to be present. Miss Barrymore had resolved on the same, though from a very different motive: she made a large party, and was in the side-box when our hero entered the house. The play was *Venice Preserved*, as before intended; and when Belvidera came on the stage, the beauty of her figure and the innocence

cence of her manner, though wholly unfit for the character she was to represent, having in it more of simplicity than majesty, yet interested the audience in her favour, and she was received with loud applauses.

Miss Barrymore was more taken up with observing Mr. Thornborough than in attending to the play. On his first entrance he had bowed to her; but adhering to his resolution, he went not to the box where she sat, though the company near him were very insipid. She returned his salutation; but though not well pleased that he made no attempt to join their party, could not discover the cause, nor imagine it to arise from design, as, though she watched his countenance,

nance, she could not perceive any particular emotions of pleasure or animation when the new actresses made her appearance. He seemed very attentive to the play, but curiosity appeared to be the principal motive; nor when Belvidera made some capital and laughable mistakes, which frequently occurred in the course of the evening, did he betray any concern; but joined equally in the smile which went round the house, and in the clapping designed to lessen her confusion.

Though Sophia was in her heart pleased that she had discovered no signs of an attachment, yet she tried to persuade herself she was sorry; as it would have been a motive with her to conquer her
par-

partiality for a man, who, by so strange a preference, proved himself unworthy of the regard he had excited in her breast.

When the play was over he came round to their box, forgetting his determination; and, after chatting some time, a gentleman asked him what he thought of the new actresses. He shook his head, and replied with a smile, the young lady had mistaken her talent, for he was sure acting was not her forte.

"Perhaps," returned the other, "she has no other support."

"Oh yes," said Mr. Thornborough, "she has friends who can take care of
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her, and who will, I doubt not, prevent her from following the profession, when they hear of her design."

"You know her, then, sir, I presume," interrupted miss Barrymore.

"Yes, madam; she is either a ward, or a distant relation, of the person with whom I lodged in town. I then first saw her, and am really concerned at the girl's imprudent and ridiculous step, in thus appearing on the stage, without one qualification but youth and beauty."

The conversation then changed; but Mr. Thornborough continued with them the remainder of the evening: and the openness of his manner, and the vivacity

city with which he returned the raillery he met with, set Sophia's heart entirely at ease with respect to miss Darley ; and she imagined it was merely curiosity which had induced him to leave their concert so precipitately a few days before.

C H A P. III.

THE following morning our hero having learned where she was to be found, called on miss Darley. He was instantly admitted; and having enquired for Mrs. Bennet, the poor girl burst into tears, and expressed a deep and hearty wish that she had never left her. This was so fair an opening, that he rejoiced in the idea that his work was already half accomplished; but willing to hear more before he mentioned his own proposal, he begged to know, if the question was not impertinent, why she had left her friends, and quitted the hopes of succeeding in a reputable

reputable way of business, for so strange and imprudent a plan as that of going upon the stage.

“Why, sir,” replied she, “I will tell you the truth at once. To be sure I do not love mantua-making, and that made me write a novel. You know I was pretty near the catastrophe that night when you frightened me so much ; and when I had quite finished, I went to Mr. — with the copy ; and it was so full of sentiment, I made sure he would give me something extraordinary for it : but, alas ! here I was sadly disappointed. I scarcely know how to confess to you the reason he gave for refusing it ; but as it was the effect of education, and not of nature, why it is the less disgrace, or else I am

sure I should blush to add, that, when he had read three or four letters, he told me the sentiments were very pretty, and the story very pathetic, and altogether it was nearly as good as many that he published; but the hand-writing was so difficult to be read, and the spelling besides somewhat unintelligible, that it would cost him more to revise than the book was worth; and that it would not answer for him to undertake it, as he had so many sent him that he could always pick and choose. I then asked if he could recommend any other bookseller; but he gave me so little encouragement to proceed at all, that I went home quite in despair. I did nothing but cry for two days, till I learned accidentally that the manager of this company wanted an actress for tragedy; and, having

having a strong idea that I should like this employment better than working, I wrote to him to offer myself. We met at the house of a friend of mine, when he was pleased to say he liked my appearance, and would take me upon trial: he added the company were then met at B——, and desired I would join them as soon as possible.

“Upon this I determined to set out, and pretending to go down to Richmond to see Mrs. Mason, who had often invited me, I took a place in the coach for B——, leaving a letter in the penny-post, to inform Mrs. Bennet that I had left London, to execute a plan for my future life, which fearing she might not entirely approve, I had resolved not to acquaint her

with, till I knew its success; but that she might depend on hearing from me soon. But I now see the impropriety of the step I have been guilty of, and would return if I knew how I should be received, and was not ashamed to see Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, who have indeed been good to me, and deserved not so ungrateful a return." Here she burst into tears. But before I go on I must inform my readers of the cause of her contrition.

The manager, who was rather of a gay disposition, had been too much captivated with her person to attend to her abilities, and, hoping with some instructions she might make a tolerable actress in time, had been very ready to engage her: but his wife, who had but too much
cause

cause for jealousy, regarded her beauty in a very different light, and had joyfully availed herself of the innumerable faults in her performance the night before, to persuade her husband to dismiss her. Finding some difficulty in gaining her point, she went before breakfast to miss Darley, and representing to her, with much anger and contempt, her presumption in supposing herself qualified for the stage, desired she would return directly to London, or it would be worse for her. Her husband entering at the same moment, a violent quarrel ensued between them, which so terrified the poor girl, that she wished herself in London a thousand times; and the more earnestly, when, in the heat of her resentment, the woman accused her of designing to draw away

her husband, and him of having intended her for his mistress; for nothing else, she said, could have tempted him to engage such a poor, silly, illiterate, squeaking thing, who had neither voice nor manner. She then drove her husband, who was quite stunned by her vociferation, out of the house, and, after throwing the frightened girl some money as a recompence for her trouble, and telling her, if she did not leave the town in less than two days, she would apply to the justices, and have her committed for a vagrant, she hastily followed, leaving Miss Darléy so much alarmed at her violence and her threats, that she was for some minutes quite stupified. A shower of tears at length coming to her relief, she grew more composed; and when our

hero arrived she was devising how to return to her friends without disgrace, and without confessing to them all her motives.

She was too wise, or rather too cunning, to tell him all that had passed: but when he pressed her, after she had concluded her story, to permit him to take her back to London, and promised to reconcile the Bennets to her, and even request them never to recall her past faults, or by their resentment induce her to repent her present determination, she cried, hesitated, and at length consented in such a manner, as if it was merely owing to his entreaties and her contrition, not saying a word that could lead him to suppose she had previously received a dismissal.

Charmed at having gained a point which he considered of the utmost consequence, he gave her not time to alter her resolution, which he feared she might, if left to herself; but sending instantly for a post-chaise, he handed her in, followed himself, and they drove off to London about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the face of all the inhabitants of B——; our hero not recollecting a construction might be put upon his conduct which he never dreamed of.

Miss Darley was extremely well pleased with this happy termination of a mad frolic; for she knew Mr. Thornborough's family, estate, connections, and character, from Mrs. Mason, who, in all her visits to her niece since they had met, made
him

him the darling theme of her conversation, and dwelt with peculiar satisfaction on the universal benevolence of his heart, and the delight he had ever taken in generous and humane actions; and was sensible the Bennets held him in such reverence, they would not refuse her their forgiveness, when he condescended to request it. She also hoped the disgraceful treatment she had experienced would not be known, and of course they would allow her some little merit, in having thus early repented her elopement.

The journey was not altogether so pleasant as she expected; for, conscious of her beauty, she imagined Mr. Thornborough would pay her many compliments, not only on that, but on the
heroic

heroic resolution with which she had conquered her hopes of fame and fortune, and returned to the humbler sphere, where she might subsist by the labour of her hands, but could never hope to shine. Instead of this, he gave her the most excellent advice for her future conduct, represented the dangers she had escaped, and pointed out, the path, by following which she might ensure comfort and tranquillity.

She listened to all he said, and promised to comply with all he advised; but she heard him with inattention and weariness: nor was he less displeased at her stupidity and insensibility; for she seemed totally unconcerned about the reception she might meet with, and apparently unconscious

conscious of having been guilty of any striking indiscretion : and he felt a little astonished that a girl so perfectly illiterate and uneducated should have the confidence to attempt either going on the stage or turning authoress, for both of which she appeared wholly unqualified. But as all the disadvantages she possessed did not lessen the merit of his interference, he rejoiced at being the cause of restoring her to her friends, which he did instantly on his arrival in town.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet had been extremely frightened and angry with her for her strange conduct : however, on his earnestly requesting their forgiveness, and telling them he had made it the condition of her return, they consented after
severely

severely reproving her, and warmly thanking him. He then left them and returned to the inn where he meant to sleep, and from whence the coach set out for B—the next morning, in which he secured a place, preferring that mode of conveyance.

CHAP.

C H A P. IV.

HIS fellow passengers were of that common class of character which merits no particular description; too cheerful to appear to want his assistance, and too insipid to make him solicitous for their further acquaintance. But about twenty miles from B—— they took up an old gentleman, whom our hero recollected to have often met with at the coffee-house there. He was a very singular character : though his birth and fortune entitled him to mix in the first society, yet he rather chose to visit his inferiors, than give up to the fashionable hours.

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For this reason, except at the coffee-house, he was seldom seen in company ; for obstinately adhering to old customs in every particular, he dined at one, drank tea at five, supped at eight, and went to bed at nine. His dress was no less conspicuous : his head and neck exhibited a wig, cravat, and collar, which can now only be seen in the pictures of our great grandfathers ; and his wide boot cuffs, waistcoat flaps, crimson coat, and yellow buttons, struck the beholder at first sight with infinite surprise ; but from the good-humoured pleasantry and drollery of his conversation, the oddity of his figure grew every moment less and less apparent, and was at length totally forgotten.

Mr.

Mr. Nesbit, for that was his name, soon entered into a familiar and easy chat with Mr. Thornborough, who was excessively delighted with the humour of his remarks. When they had dropped the rest of the passengers, which happened before they came within ten miles of the town, Mr. Nesbit, taking a book and roll of papers out of his pocket, asked his companion if he would subscribe to a pamphlet he intended soon to publish.

“Certainly I will,” returned our hero ;
“but pray what is the subject ?”

“You have a right to ask that, to be sure,” answered the old gentleman, squeezing up his face into an odd form ;
“and I will tell you. I am going to start
a new

a new hypothesis, and prove that in a few generations more the life of man will be extended to the same length it was before the flood; and more, that it is already far advanced in this improvement."

Mr. Thornborough, though much surprised at this strange speech, yet replied with his usual pleasantry, "This doctrine, my good sir, will be very acceptable to those who, from the avidity with which they pursue the pleasures of life, must rejoice in the hope of its being extended; particularly as youth must be lengthened in proportion to the rest, and they may look forward many years without viewing that period when age and infirmity work an involuntary reformation, and

force them to resign those delights they have so long cherished. But pray, if I may ask the question, how do you mean to prove this?"

"Why, sir," answered Mr. Nesbit, "have you not frequently read in the papers, within these few years, the deaths of different people at ninety or an hundred years of age, and many even older? Now, as I imagine, the life of man will be extended by degrees, ten or twelve years perhaps in every generation; for if more than that, it would lose its intended effect, and become a source of misery, instead of the reverse. As an instance, if you, sir, were to live two hundred years or thereabouts, even if all of your own age were to live nearly the same time, yet

yet to lose those connections and friends whom from your infancy you have been taught to love and revere, perhaps a century and a half before you were to follow, would be to a man of a serious turn a disagreeable idea."

"Disagreeable, indeed," returned our hero; "nor have I the least wish to remain here even half the time you speak of."

"But ten or twenty years," continued the old gentleman, "will make no vast difference; and therefore I imagine it will be protracted by those degrees. And I will soon prove to you this is not idea only. I have formed my opinion from observations, of which I think you will allow the force. Then opening the book
in

in his hand, which wast he eighth volume of the Spectator, "Here, fir," continued he, "you have probably read the antediluvian story of Hilpa and Shalum, and may remember this sentence:

'Hilpa was exceedingly beautiful, and, when she was but a girl of threescore and ten years of age, received the addresses of several who made love to her.'

"And what pray in these days is so common as a girl of threescore and ten?"

Mr. Thornborough, who for some time had thought his companion a mad man, now clearly understood his keen satire; but unwilling to interrupt him, he only indulged himself in a hearty laugh, whilst the other went on.

"I would

“I would not have the world mistake my meaning ; and hope it is evident to you, that I do not by this intend to say the present race of young ladies have all the solidity of their grandmothers ; but the reverse. I mean, that at seventy years of age they are most of them *still* girls. But between them and Hilpa there is yet a difference ; for the latter we suppose, from the expression “ but a girl,” to have been just entering into life, and thought full young to have so many admirers. Our ladies, by being termed *still* girls, may be imagined to be on the point of losing all right to that term ; though, as females love dominion, they are very unwilling even at this age to resign their pretensions : and it is from this circumstance I shall prove we are as yet only
advancing

advancing to that happy time, when a hundred years will be no more than ten are at present.

“And now, fir, what do you fay? I have feen you in the polite circles at B——; and furely you muft have obferved many of thefe Hilpas, for there are plenty of them in the town: and farther, I believe they are already of my opinion; for they not only drefs like young people, but behave in the fame thoughtlefs manner, and feem as little apprehenfive of the hafty strides of age, as if two or three hundred was the common life of man: and furely, if they were in the leaft confcious, that their exiftence would be extended but a few years, they could not

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be thus careless of all they ought to attend to."

Mr. Thornborough was extremely diverted by his companion's amusing harangue; and joined in his opinion of the levity and folly of the age.

"And yet," continued Mr. Nesbit, "is it not surprising, that the writers of the present times copy so little from nature? In real life, we often see parents and children in the same cotillon; and may, possibly, in the same assembly, discover four generations: yet, in almost all the modern publications, whether novels, poems, or sentimental tales, we read of grey-headed fathers bending over their blooming offspring, and even little infants

infants playing with their grandfire's crutches; when I declare, the very reverse has, in real life, fallen under my own observation: and, at this time, I know a young fellow, of seventy, introducing his grandson, a young fellow of seventeen, into all the dissipation, all the irregularities, and, I fear I may add, all the debaucheries of fashionable life."

Mr. Thornborough shuddered at a picture too true; and mentally returned thanks to Heaven for having preserved his mind uncorrupted, and for the example and precepts in early youth set before his view.

A good deal more conversation passed between them, on these and other sub-

jects; in the course of which Mr. Nesbit displayed so much real wit and humour, and satire so general, with very little personal ridicule, and so much morality, that our hero was particularly charmed, and promised to call frequently on him whilst he continued at B——. Nor was the old gentleman less pleased with him: his oddity of dress, and the singular style of his living and appearance, had given many of the fashionable world a plea for behaving to him with a contempt he little deserved. But the vivacity, the politeness, the attention, of our hero, quite won his heart; and they parted with a mutual wish and promise of soon meeting again.

C H A P. V.

MISS Barrymore's well-known character for active benevolence and universal humanity drew on her numerous applications. The day before our hero's last excursion to London, she had met with a poor child, who, in accents of unfeigned distress, implored her relief. She bade the girl follow her home, and ordered the servant to take her into the kitchen, and give her some meat. The little creature scarcely tasted what they gave her, but, wrapping it in her apron, said, though she was very hungry, her poor mammy was hungry and sick too; and desired she might carry it home.

D 3

Sophia,

Sophia, much affected with this instance of tenderness, bade the child eat what she would, and her mother should have more. She then told her own maid to go back with the girl, and bring her word what the real situation of the family was; at the same time sending what she thought necessary for the woman's immediate relief. The servant, who had caught some of her lady's charity, returned with so deplorable an account, that miss Barrymore resolved to visit her the next morning, and contrive some means for her present comfort, even if her recovery was impossible, as Beatrice had informed her she had every appearance of a deep decline.

She set out soon after breakfast, and
found

found the poor woman apparently in the last stage. Her lodging, which was in the garret of a tolerable house, was yet so cold, that Sophia thought the first step towards a recovery, would be removing her to a warmer apartment. Sending, therefore, for the landlady, she enquired if she could not accommodate her with another, and promised to pay the rent.

“ Yes, madam,” replied she ; “ as good luck would have it, there’s a young lady belonging to the players just going: there’s a fine gentleman just come after her, and he has sent for a post-chaise ; so Sukey Pearson may be carried down, as I don’t suppose ’twill be a quarter of an hour before she’ll be off.”

“ A player !”

“A player!” said miss Barrymore, with some emotion. “Do you know her name?”

“Darley, madam,” replied the woman.

This was enough for Sophia: she sat by the poor creature’s bed-side in a deep reverie, in which the scene before her had little share, till she was awakened from it by a girl’s entering the room hastily, and saying: “Mother, miss is just going, and the gentleman waits to pay you.”

The landlady disappeared; and Sophia, walking to the window, observed a post-chaise standing at the door, into
which,

which, in a few minutes, she saw our hero hand miss Darley, and they drove off immediately.

Her fears thus confirmed, and her hopes thus dissipated, she felt a strange sensation of uneasiness, for which she could scarcely account, as she had little idea how much Mr. Thornborough was the subject of her thoughts; and she felt mortified at being disappointed in a character, of which she had formed so high an opinion.

The landlady came back in high good humour, praising the gentleman's generosity to the skies, and saying, she warranted it was not for nothing he had begged miss to go with him; and in-

D 5

deed

deed she thought she was in high luck, to get so rich and so fine a gentleman to take care of her.

Miss Barrymore sighed; but, endeavouring to suppress her uneasiness, she desired the poor woman might be removed directly; and, as her own children were too young to act as nurses, ordered the landlady to see she was properly attended, and the expences she would be answerable for. She then took leave. The poor invalid was too faint to return those thanks her kindness merited; but she promised to see her again very soon, and returned home.

Her aunt was alone in the parlour; and Sophia, sitting down by the fire,

continued silent a few minutes : at last—
“ Well, madam,” said she, “ it is all true.”

“ What is true, Sophy ?”

“ Why, that Mr. Godfrey has a connection with that young actress we saw last night ; as he is this morning just gone off with her to London.”

“ Well, my dear ; but why should it concern you so deeply ?”

Sophia coloured. “ Surely, madam, it is too striking a proof of the depravity of human nature, not to give very unpleasant sensations to one who had formed an opinion of the young man, which

his conduct has not disappointed merely in this respect, but in every other; for he must be a complete master of duplicity, who could, with such apparent frankness and candour, disavow any particular interest in the young creature, when he must have previously concerted the plan which he this morning executed."

"I am sorry to say, my dear girl," replied her aunt, "it is too much the way of the world; and, as you go through life, you will meet too many such instances." Mr. Barrymore then entering the room, Sophia made no reply, and the subject dropped.

When Mr. Thornborough returned to

B——,

B——, he was a little surprised, and not a little mortified, at being received by the female part of the Barrymore family, when he called, with a peculiar coldness; a coldness the more marked, as it was inconsistent with their general character. This, however, from his mistaking the cause, only confirmed the more strongly his intentions with respect to Letitia Wilding, whose countenance betrayed the liveliest, the most animated satisfaction, when they first met, after this short separation.

Mr. Godfrey informed him he had received from her a decisive answer; and, in consequence of it, he had determined to try his fortune with her sister, who, though not equally handsome, had
yet

yet sufficient attractions to engage him. "You," continued he, "are the idol of Letitia; and I believe, from my soul, she will go into a consumption if you return not her attachment."

"There will be no danger of that," answered he, "if it depends upon me. I have yet seen no woman who has equally the power and *inclination* to make me happy: and with what pleasure do I anticipate the hour, when her disinterested love will be rewarded by her knowledge of the splendour that awaits her!"

Mr. Godfrey replied, he wished his own happiness was as secure; but he
knew

knew not how Charlotte would receive the news of his degradation.

“Fear not,” cried his generous friend; “can happiness be too dearly bought? And when I owe all I have to your attention, think not I can be ungrateful. You may depend on possessing whatever you or your Charlotte can wish for, that is in my power to bestow.”

Mr. Godfrey, conscious of his own duplicity, thanked him with an awkwardness, which the other attributed to excess of gratitude, and desired the subject might be dropped.

From this time, in their visits to Mr.
Wilding,

Wilding, which were more frequent than ever, Mr. Godfrey transferred his attentions to Charlotte, and Mr. Thornborough paid his devoirs to the delighted Letitia. She received them with such a proper mixture of approbation and reserve, and discovered her partiality by a thousand trifling instances, yet with the most feminine delicacy, that he was more than ever convinced of the propriety of his choice, and waited only a proper opportunity to make a full declaration of his sentiments. That opportunity was not long sought for in vain.

Charlotte, who assiduously avoided her lover, was engaged abroad more than ever. Mr. Godfrey followed her to all
public

public places, and in every visit where he could with propriety : and Mr. and Mrs. Wilding going out of town for a few days, our hero determined to avail himself of their absence; and calling one morning, when his friend was otherwise engaged, he had the good fortune to meet miss Wilding alone in the parlour. He addressed her with politeness, but without that timidity or confusion, which is usually attendant on those who are deeply interested in the subject, and who fear an unfavourable answer : yet, with a peculiar delicacy, he avoided giving her the least hint he had seen through her partiality.

She heard him with much pleasure, but with little surprise, having long
known

known his sentiments from his friend ; and, with a pretty affected air, she disclaimed his compliments, and pretended to believe it impossible he could have regarded her with so partial an eye ; till his repeated asseverations, and continued entreaties, induced her to confess she was by no means insensible of his affection, and returned it with as much reality as he could wish. He thanked her very sincerely, but very soberly, for this confession : he pressed her hand to his lips, and asked if he might not apply to her father. This question she only answered with a blush ; and he was now sufficiently convinced of her love, to have any doubts to heighten his own. He continued with her till the hour of dinner approaching

proaching reminded him of an engagement, and he then took leave, after fixing an hour to wait on her father the next day, and obtaining permission to visit her constantly, till that happy one which should unite them for ever. Mr. Wilding's consent was obtained without any difficulty, as the reader will easily suppose; and it was soon universally known, that our hero was paying his addresses to miss Wilding.

Miss Barrymore was not the last who heard it, nor the least affected by it. Mr. Harrison, who had no spirit but the spirit of curiosity, which, however, was sufficiently strong to make up for the want of it in other respects, was told of it at a rout. He suspected Sophia's prepossession,

sion, and, willing to discover her real sentiments, if possible, he called at Mr. Barrymore's the next morning, and, finding the ladies at their work, he began :

“ Well, have you heard the news ? ”

“ No,” cried Mrs. Barrymore, with a smile; “ we seldom hear any but when you visit us, Mr. Harrison.”

“ Oh ! I am glad of it,” replied he; “ and now you shall guess. There is going to be a wedding not a thousand miles from —— street. Who do you think it is ? ”

He looked at Sophia with so much intended

intended archness, that she instantly saw through his design; and, suspecting our hero was some way concerned, resolved to arm her mind with fortitude, and preserve the utmost calmness of countenance, let him say what he would. The moment she believed this was possible, it became really so; and, with much apparent unconcern, she asked if it was Mr. Thornborough and miss Wilding.

“You are right,” said Mr. Harrison, “as to the lady; but the gentleman is ——”

“Mr. Godfrey, perhaps,” cried Sophia, with so much unconcern, that Harrison thought for once his penetration had been in fault.

“Yes,”

“Yes,” continued he, “now you have them both sure enough; and I can tell you how it all happened. Mr. Thornborough, as you know, paid his addresses to miss Wilding; but the girl refused him, like a fool, and has now consented to marry his friend, to whom it is said she was previously attached.”

Ah! thought Sophia, she never gave so striking a proof of her discernment before.

“Well,” interrupted Mrs. Barrymore, “and she acted very wisely, though unlike the generality of the world, to fix on the man she could be most happy with.” And in these sentiments her niece joined so cordially and frankly, that Harrison was

was not only vexed at having made no farther discovery, but also at being obliged almost to give up an opinion he had long cherished, and contradict a story he had often circulated.

After half an hour's farther conversation upon this and other subjects, he took leave. But Sophia's tranquillity was only assumed: she retired to her own apartment, and gave way to the train of reflections this intelligence inspired. His running away with an actress, though it accorded not with his moral character, and was inconsistent with the sentiments he usually professed, was yet too common an event in the annals of gallantry, to excite her surprise, though it had raised her resentment, and lessened her good opinion

opinion of him: but for his present conduct she could in no way account, as miss Wilding, though very handsome, was, she thought, of a character too insipid, too trifling, and too little varied, to inspire a lasting affection in the breast of one, whose conversation proved him no less the man of education and learning, than his dignity, elegance, and spirit, the man of taste and fashion. But from the late resolute propriety of her own behaviour, she fancied she had obtained a complete conquest over herself; and in this certainty determined no longer to avoid him as usual. She was too conscious of the rectitude of her heart, and the steadiness of her mind, to fear entertaining one improper sentiment for a man, who had never shewn her the least

least degree of partiality, and who was now destined to be the husband of another. Yet she feared, from Mr. Harrison's manner, her partiality had been suspected, and that there might be constructions put upon her conduct she was now certain of not deserving.

C H A P. VI.

LET me now refer my readers to a former part of this history, and recall to their remembrance the Mr. Littleton who had accompanied George Thornborough on his travels. He was a clergyman of a good family; but had no other expectations of a living, except what arose from his hopes of succeeding to one in the gift of the college, of which he was but a junior fellow, when he was introduced to miss Charlotte Wilding, at Bath, where she was then with her aunt.

A striking

A striking similarity of character soon attached them to each other with a steadiness no time or distance had power to lessen. They both possessed strong understandings, excellent hearts, and strict principles: but Mr. Littleton was too seriously in love, to wish to marry her till he could provide for her in some manner suitable to the style in which she now lived with Mrs. Emerton, who had a large jointure, and kept the best company. But a fixed engagement took place between them; though it was mutually agreed to keep it a profound secret, till some acquisition of fortune, or preferment, should enable them to reveal it to the world.

Mr. Littleton soon returned to Ox-

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ford,

ford, where his acquaintance with the Thornboroughs, which had been slight, some accident improved into intimacy; and he received with the utmost pleasure the offer of accompanying George on his travels. A perfect harmony subsisted between them, as George Thornborough possessed that real ease and good-humour which enabled him to listen to Mr. Littleton's admonitions, which he too frequently deserved, with candour, and acknowledgments of their propriety, though he paid too little attention to them.

Mr. Littleton, though not engaged as a regular tutor, and though in hopes of succeeding to a good living through his means, yet never yielded, in a single instance,

instance, what he considered as right and proper. This strictness might have destroyed his expectations, had not George's disposition been so peculiarly mild. As it was, he considered these reproofs as additional tokens of his regard; and, in consequence, when he made his will, had not only left him a handsome legacy, but had recommended him to his brother with respect to the living.

The melancholy accident which occasioned his death was a source of unfeigned affliction to Mr. Littleton; and his constitution was so shaken by his exertions and his grief, that, as has been already related, he was for some time confined to the convent; and, when sufficiently recovered to travel, he was ad-

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vifed not to return to England till the fpring; and accordingly went from thence to Nice, where he refolved to fpend the winter.

A regular correfpondence had been kept up between him and Charlotte ever fince they parted at Bath; and to our hero he alfo wrote constantly: and foon after the latter arrived at B——, Mr. Littleton received a letter from Charlotte, a paragraph from which I tranfcribe, for the better information of my readers.

“ I know not how it is; our taftes were perfectly fimilar: but you have been certainly either deceived in the character of your patron, Mr. Thornborough, or he is much altered fince you
knew

knew him at college. Vain, superficial, presumptuous, positive and overbearing, I have entertained a real dislike to him, which I vainly attempt to conquer, by reflecting on what you already owe to his family, and what you still expect from him. But I contrive, for your sake, for both our sakes, to conceal my sentiments, and behave with reserve, but civility. He at present pays his addresses to my sister. She receives them with coldness, and has declared to me her intention of refusing him, whenever, by a real declaration, he puts it in her power. I cannot at all understand this; for to you I may confess, Letitia has not refinement enough to have any objection to him for the reasons I mentioned before; and I too well know her plan has long been, to

establish herself well by marriage ; and where will she again meet with a man of Mr. Thornborough's fortune, who will overlook her comparative poverty ? His friend, Mr. Godfrey, who accompanied him to B——, is unblest by any of the gifts of the fickle goddess ; yet is happy in all that nature and education could bestow. I should almost suspect Letitia was secretly attached to him, did I not know she has too much worldly wisdom. I have not mentioned your name to Mr. Thornborough, nor shall I, unless you wish it. Do not let your hopes of him be too sanguine. I wish I may be mistaken ; but, in my opinion, he has neither gratitude nor generosity."

Mr. Littleton was extremely hurt and
surprised

surprised at this account of the friend to whom he looked up for preferment, and whom he had regarded with a high degree of admiration and respect: but believing implicitly all Charlotte had asserted, and knowing how few can stand the test of unbounded affluence, when unchecked by authority and uncontrouled by advice, he concluded, prosperity, independence, and his rushing into the gay world, to which he had been so long a stranger, without a friend to guide, or a monitor to direct him, and where the examples continually before him, of the young unprincipled men of fashion, could not fail of having an influence, had perverted a mind naturally well inclined, and corrupted a heart which had,

in early youth, given so many proofs of integrity and virtue.

A short time after this, Mr. Thornborough, having every reason to hope he should soon be happy in the possession of miss Wilding's hand, as he was now convinced he had long been of her heart, demanded Mr. Littleton's congratulations on his having met with a woman so every way qualified to make him happy. But, conscious of his own folly and ridiculous delicacy, and not knowing Mr. Littleton's previous acquaintance with the Wildings, he spoke not of his change of name, and only mentioned being at B——, with his friend Mr. Godfrey. Of the rest of the family he also spoke little; and concluded his letter with such warm assurances

assurances of continued esteem, that Mr. Littleton began almost to recall his late formed opinion, and once more to believe him all he had formerly appeared.

In the mean time, Mr. Godfrey transferred his addresses to Charlotte, which for some time she evaded with much dexterity, in such a manner as neither to encourage nor offend; for she feared his resentment to her might injure Mr. Littleton, when their connection was acknowledged. But when they became so pointed, that she could no longer laugh off his compliments, or pretend ignorance of his real sentiments, she became seriously alarmed, and again wrote to Mr. Littleton, in the following manner.

“ Distressed beyond measure at the unfortunate events which have happened since my last letter, I am yet unwilling to communicate to your bosom the apprehensions which distract mine, and which must be the consequence of my revealing a secret that, however, I must disclose; as without your advice I know not how to proceed, nor how to avoid the cruel persecutions I must expect, if I continue my present conduct, without assigning some satisfactory reason. Mr. Thornborough has been refused by my sister, who is since engaged to Mr. Godfrey, and has declared his preference of me; a preference which, by way of excuse for first addressing my sister, he pretends is excited by the extreme superiority of my understanding to hers, which the
length

length of our acquaintance has enabled him to discover, but which my reserve had at first concealed. Alas ! he little knows my mind is indeed superior to flattery, and that I value his compliments as little as I merit them. I have hitherto laughed at him ; but I can do so no longer. He yesterday, in the most unquestionable manner, made me an offer of his hand and fortune. I refused him with the utmost civility ; but he will not take my refusal, unless I assign a reason. Had he one spark of that liberality, that delicacy, that generosity, you once fancied he possessed, I would instantly have confessed my engagement to you : but that would have destroyed your hopes for ever ; and I cannot bear the idea of being the means of depriving
you

you of your expectations of that independence to which your attendance on his brother has given you an undoubted right. Besides, I know so well your own romantic delicacy; and you have so often told me, that you would not accept my hand, though my fortune, added to your own, would support us in ease and comfort, unless you could be enabled to live in the style to which I have been accustomed; that I must fix on some method of refusing him, without exciting his resentment towards you or me. But you know not my heart, nor the spirit of content that reigns there. Certain of possessing your esteem, and secure of the comforts of life, I should never sigh for its luxuries; and, since I have seen your friend Mr. Thornborough,

rough, I have learned to contemn affluence. It was a wise man who said, 'To despise riches, one need only consider who are the possessors.' And I am of his opinion. Yet I will so far accede to your wishes, as to follow any plan you can point out; for, I am convinced, if it is possible for me to refuse Mr. Thornborough, without discovering our present acquaintance, he may suppose hereafter our attachment to be of a later date than his own, and consequently feel no resentment to you, for being only of the same opinion as himself, and preferring to all the rest of the world her whose only ambition is to be

Ever yours,

CHARLOTTE WILDING."

This

This letter arriving at Nice at the same time with that in which our hero confessed his attachment to miss Wilding, gave Mr. Littleton the most poignant sensations of grief and resentment. Enraged at the duplicity of his friend, for pretending to have so deep an interest in Charlotte's heart, when her letter convinced him of the contrary, he was for some time incapable of considering coolly what steps were to be taken for their mutual safety; when it occurred to him, Mr. Thornborough's letter might be written at the time he courted the elder sister: but, on looking at the date, even that slight hope was lost. It then struck him, that our hero, though he could not guess from what motive, endeavoured purposely to mislead him into

an

an opinion, that it was miss Wilding to whom he was attached, as Charlotte's name was never mentioned through the whole: and though, as a man of honour, he scorned to repay his duplicity with the same, yet he thought himself justified in using concealment to effect his purpose; and, with this view, resolved to take no notice of his letter, but answer Charlotte's immediately. An extract from this I will lay before my readers.

“Inconceivably alarmed as I am, my beloved Charlotte, at your intelligence, I yet know not what to advise; and am still more distressed by having received, by the same post which brought yours, a letter from the gentleman in question.

He

He tells me he is soon to be married to you; but writes in such an ambiguous manner, that, did I not know the contrary from yourself, I should conclude it was your sister he addressed: but the date, and a thousand other circumstances, tell too plainly he wishes to deceive me; but with what view I am wholly ignorant; for I believe he knows not of our acquaintance, and on this rest all my hopes. Your scheme is an excellent one, if you know how to set about it. I am unfit to advise you; I am too much agitated myself. The invention of woman is quicker and brighter; and you, my Charlotte, are equal to any thing. Yet suppose (the idea is vague and wild, I confess, but you may possibly improve on it)—suppose you were to make
a plea

a plea of offended delicacy, and scorn to accept a heart once devoted to your sister, and which you cannot consider as all your own. If this fails, continue to refuse him steadily; and, if persecuted beyond what your gentle mind can support, boldly avow your engagement to me, and perish all my hopes of affluence. It was only for your sake I ever wished for more than competence; and since you can thus cheerfully resign it, where would be my gratitude, if I could not yield up all the world for you, when your heart is the dearest, the most invaluable treasure in it, to your devoted

ROBERT LITTLETON."

CHAP.

C H A P. VII.

DURING the interval that these letters were passing between Mr. Littleton and Charlotte, Mr. Godfrey gained very little ground in his addresses ; whilst our hero was every day more and more convinced of the fair Letitia's attachment to him, and of course became more sensible of and more grateful for it. A pressing invitation having been given to them both, to spend a few days with a large party at Ravenhurst, the seat of a gentleman about eight miles from B——, our hero determined to accept it, leaving his friend in a very hopeless situation.

Miss

Miss Wilding, though her behaviour gave him no plea for anxiety or doubt, yet would have been better pleased had he felt sufficient to induce him to remain at B——, as she knew the Barrymores were all at sir James Wilmot's; and Sophia was the only woman in the world whose influence she dreaded: her beauty was ever acknowledged superior to her own; and she had heard Mr. Thornborough speak of her wit, sense, and accomplishments, in terms too high to allow her to feel quite satisfied at the idea of his passing three or four days under the same roof with this attractive and dangerous young woman. However, having no resource, no plea to prevent him, she was obliged to yield; but she did it with so ill a grace, that it being
the

the first frown our hero had ever seen upon her brow, it gave him some unpleasant sensations, which he attempted however to conquer, when he reflected that he had now gone too far to recede with honour.

It was late in the afternoon when he set out ; and as Ravenhurst lay quite out of the turnpike road, the rains which had for some days fallen very heavily made the roads extremely disagreeable. About four miles from B——, as he was driving through a little dirty village, he was stopped by a countryman, who told him the brook at the end of the street, which he must necessarily pass, was so much swelled by the late rains, that it was dangerous to attempt going through. He paused at
this

this account; but, unwilling to return, he told the man, as the phaeton he was in was extremely high, he thought he might venture safely. The other replied, that made a great difference to be sure, and he did not know but he might. Encouraged by this, he went on boldly, entered the water, and got through without any danger; but he perceived it was still rising, and thought in half an hour it would be totally impassable, as the current was strong, and the bottom stony and uneven.

The rain now poured with extreme violence, the wind blew very high, and the evening began to draw towards a close; when, having passed the brook, he ascended a steep hill, from the top of
1 which

which the road continued over a wide common to Ravenhurst, with only one or two houses in the way. Just as he reached the summit, he saw a carriage driving furiously towards him; and, judging it was going the road he came, he determined to stop it, and relate the dangers he had encountered, which were, in all probability, now increased. As it drew near, he saw it was a hack chaise, with only a lady in it, who, on hearing him speak to the postillion, put her head out of the window, and begged to know what was the matter.

“ I am sorry, madam,” said our hero, who now drove up close to the carriage, “ to inform you that you cannot proceed on your journey, but with the hazard

hazard of your life, as the brook at Highford-mill is, I fear, by this time impassable."

"Good Heaven!" cried she, clasping her hands in an agony of grief, "what shall I do? Yet I must go. I thank you, sir, for your sollicitude; but I cannot avail myself of it: every thing most dear to me depends on the speed with which I execute this journey: the least delay is worse than death; therefore, even at the hazard of my life, I must proceed."

"Madam," replied Mr. Thornborough, extremely affected by the earnestness of her manner, and thinking he had now, at least, found a proper object for

his benevolent Quixotism, "can I assist you? I am going only on a visit of pleasure; and what amusement is there which ought not to yield to higher claims? Suffer me to be your messenger; return to the home you have left, and, give me but a direction, I will go wherever you shall request, account for your absence, deliver whatever message you shall give me; and if I can be farther useful, scruple not to command me."

The lady burst into tears, and replied :
 "I thank you, sir, more than I can express : but my own presence is absolutely necessary, and I again repeat, I must go on. My own life will not, I trust, be endangered, if I open the carriage doors.

doors. But how shall I preserve this infant, whose tender age renders it almost impossible she should survive the dangers I must encounter?"

At these words, Mr. Thornborough, for the first time, perceived she had a little infant asleep on her lap, wrapped up in a dimity cloke. Struck as he was with surprise, the impulse of humanity prompted him, in the same moment, to save its little life, by offering to take it back to the house she had left.

"If you can, madam," said he, "in this exigency, which admits of no other alternative, trust a stranger with your charge, I will undertake to convey it wherever you please, as your journey

admits not of the delay of returning with it yourself."

She paused for a few minutes ; then, looking steadily at him, requested to know his name.

He replied involuntarily, "Thornborough."

"Thornborough," repeated she, "of Berkshire?"

"Yes, of Berkshire, madam."

"Then, for Heaven's sake, hear my request. Take the child ; but, by all your hopes of happiness, promise me, faithfully promise me, not to mention to
a human

a human creature to whom it belongs, nor how nor where you met with it, whilst it is in your possession. If you refuse this, your charity avails me nothing; you may ruin my fame, my fortune, my happiness; you may destroy with affliction those whom you know not, and may bow down their grey hairs with sorrow, who never injured you, and who have yet known no pangs equal to what must arise from the dishonour of a child."

Mr. Thornborough, shocked beyond measure at the solemnity of her address and adjuration, promised all she desired, not conceiving it possible, in the short time it would be under his care, it should be any embarrassment to him. Springing, therefore, from the phaeton, he took

the child in his arms, and, placing it safely, returned for the direction. She paused for a minute; and, it being too dark for her to write, she could only mention, that at No. —, Fleet-street, London, the child would be received, and no questions asked.

Greatly surprised at this, expecting only to have the care of it for a few miles, he would have declined the charge, as wholly unequal to it: but it was now too late; and the lady, repeating her thanks in the liveliest manner, ordered her postillion to drive on with the utmost speed. He complied, and our hero was left, before he could recover from his astonishment, in a stormy night, upon a wild common, alone, with a
young

young infant to take care of; for he had ordered his servant to follow him the next morning, as he expected letters of consequence, which Mr. Godfrey was to enclose, and direct by his fictitious name.

Wholly unaccustomed to the employment of nursing, he spent some time in contriving how he should go on, and to what place; for sir James Wilmot's was now out of the question, as his first view was to procure a nurse for his little fellow-traveller. Not thinking it safe by his side, he threw back the head of the phaeton, which had been put up to keep him from the rain; and, taking off his great coat, he wrapped up the

infant in it, and laid it there. He then drove slowly on, lest the jolting should awaken it, though exposed himself to all the weather, and began to consider where he should go. A few minutes meditation suggested to him to drive to some little village, leave the child with a nurse, and go on to Ravenhurst himself, but not to stay; then, hiring the nurse to attend him, set off directly to London, and deliver up his precious charge.

Having thus arranged matters, he went on with some degree of composure; when about two miles from the spot, a coach and four passed him. The same impulse prompted him to call out and stop them, to give the same advice he had before
ineffectually

ineffectually given the lady: "for, surely," said he to himself, "here are no more infants to tease me with." A well-known voice from the coach, when it stopped, convinced him of what he had not before dreaded, that it was Mr. Barrymore's. Though it was too dark to distinguish his person, that gentleman heard him speak to the postillion, and instantly recollected him.

"Hey, Godfrey!" cried he, "what you are going to Ravenhurst? But what made you so late? They expected you to dinner."

Surprise and vexation prevented him from speaking directly: but when he

could articulate, he replied : " I wish I had been earlier, indeed : as it is, I fear I shall not arrive in any time, and, therefore, I believe I shall defer it till to-morrow."

" What the devil !" said Mr. Harrison, who had not spoken before, " do you intend to sleep upon the common? It is a fine night for such a frolic, to be sure. But perhaps you have made an appointment with another old gentlewoman."

" Are the ladies in the coach?" said Mr. Thornborough, disregarding his speech.

" Yes," cried a sweet voice from the opposite side, " we are both here: would

we were not; for the weather and the roads are so bad, that——”

“You must not go on,” interrupted Mr. Thornborough, with particular earnestness; “indeed you must not. I had spoken to the coachman, even before I knew whose carriage it was, to say he *must* not attempt it.”

“Why not?” cried Mr. Barrymore, in a peevish accent.

“The waters at Highford-mill are by this time impassable: when I came through they were rising, and even dangerous. You will not, surely, sir, risque your own life, and the lives of these ladies, by attempting it.”

Mr. Harrison, whose thoughts centred chiefly in himself, at this opened the coach-door, and said, "Mr. Barrymore may do as he pleases ; but I shall not venture, I promise you : so, Godfrey, I will go back to Ravenhurst with you."

Our hero, inexpressibly alarmed at this, replied hesitating, "I know not that I shall go to sir James Wilmot's till to-morrow. But surely, Harrison, you will not leave the ladies; nor will Mr. Barrymore himself encounter the dangers I have mentioned."

"No," cried Mr. Barrymore, "you need not run away, Tom : however inconvenient it is for me to stay, I will not have all your lives to answer for; so order
Joseph

Joseph to drive back to the Crown: we will try to get accommodated there for once."

Mr. Thornborough rejoiced at his fortunate escape from his companion, now hoped to remain undiscovered, and proposed accompanying them back to the public-house, and then strike off to a village about three miles from thence, on the opposite side from Ravenhurst: for he feared going immediately to that neighbourhood, lest suspicions should be excited he knew not how to remove.

The rain still continued with violence, and, during this conversation, having penetrated through part of his great coat, wet the infant's face. Awakened by the cold,
it

it began crying with as much vehemence as its little frame was capable of; which, in the stillness of the evening, could not fail of being heard by the party in the coach.

“ Good heavens! what is that?” cried Mrs. Barrymore. Sophia listened attentively; and Tom Harrison, whose ears and eyes were ever in search of novelty and information, exclaimed, with a loud laugh: “ What is it! Why Godfrey has a young child in the phaeton, I believe.”

The sound had been too indistinct for them positively to determine from whence it arose; and this gentleman had only spoken from conjecture: but the
confusion

confusion of our hero, which was evident in his words and manner, converted their surmises into certainty.

“It is,” hesitatingly answered he, “a young child, an infant, to be sure, that I have promised—that is, I am to convey—to restore, I would say, to its parents, as soon as ever I can return to ——”

“A little child!” interrupted Harrison. Why, Godfrey, have you been kidnapping? or is it one you are in duty bound to protect? eh!”

“Whatever it is, or whoever it belongs to,” returned Mr. Thornborough with spirit, “it is at present under my
care;

care ; nor will all your jests, which little concern me, tempt me to relinquish a charge I have undertaken."

" Oh, no," cried Harrison, " to be sure you will not resign it. Indeed it would be very wicked ; for who can be expected to take care of such helpless little things, if they are forsaken by their own parents ? But hang me, if I don't think mothers know most of the matter in general ; though you may have practised nursing so long, that it is nothing new to you ; and may have very substantial reasons for not letting its mamma appear."

Mr. Thornborough, though disturbed and irritated by his impertinent curiosity, yet considering that nothing he could possibly

possibly say, in vindication of himself, would have any effect upon the minds of the party, unless he dared confess the truth at once, which a fatal promise prevented him from, resolved to attempt no farther evasions, which he found would only more deeply involve him in difficulties, and continued silent ; whilst Sophia, in a low voice, addressed her aunt :

“ Dear madam, let the child be whose it will, it would be the height of inhumanity to suffer it to remain in an open carriage such a dreadful night. Let us take it into the coach.” “ Certainly, my dear,” replied Mrs. Barrymore ; and was just beginning to speak to our hero, when
the

the officious Harrifon prevented her, by calling out :

“ Here, Godfrey, you are in high luck, I can tell you : mifs Sophia will take care of your baby, and be its mamma for the prefent. She is afraid the poor thing will be drowned ; fo, in compaffion to your feelings, which ought to be very acute, fhe will herfelf afford it that protection its real, but, I muft add, unnatural parent has denied.”

Mr. Thornborough answered only by a deep figh, the caufe of which he could fcarcely trace. But it was, in fact, owing to the mortification and regret he felt at having all the Barrymores, for whole good opinion he was fo folicitous, wit-
neffes

nesses of a scene which placed him both in a ridiculous and criminal point of view. His honour was pledged not to reveal the circumstances; and they could not but imagine there was some very extraordinary reason for this strange conduct.

Uncertain in what manner to act, he paused: but Mrs. Barrymore confirming what Harrison had said, he took the child in his arms, and gave it to the ladies. It still continued crying with violence; and the young man, jumping out of the coach at the same moment, desired to have the vacant seat in the phaeton; swearing he had rather be exposed to all the fury of the elements, than shut up with a squalling brat.

The

The coach then, by Mr. Barrymore's order, turned and drove to the Crown. The two gentlemen followed, Harrifon vainly endeavouring to find out the real cause of the situation in which they met him : for Mr. Thornborough had too much prudence, as well as too much honour, to satisfy his curiosity.

C H A P. VIII.

ON their arrival at the public-house, Mr. Harrison, already tired of the family party, represented to our hero, that, as he was really expected at Ravenhurst, he must send an excuse; and offered, if he would lend him the phaeton, to be himself the messenger; for he longed to mention the events of the evening to the party assembled there. Mr. Thornborough made no objection, though he could not but guess at the motive: but at the same time he knew his propensity to relate, as well as hear, was such, that, if disappointed in the present instance,

he

he would avail himself of every future opportunity; and, by yielding to his request, he should be released for the evening from his tiresome and embarrassing conversation, and enjoy, as well as he could in his present frame of mind, the society of the Barrymores.

On their being shewn into a little parlour, they took the cloke from the infant, and discovered, to their infinite surprise, it was not apparently more than five weeks old; and it was so shaken by the journey, so exhausted by crying, and so pinched by the cold, that Mrs. Barrymore expressed her fears that it would not live, unless a nurse was instantly provided. This the landlady undertook: she had a married daughter in the village,

lage, who had a large family of children. To her care the little girl was consigned; and Mr. Thornborough sat down with the Barrymores with some tranquillity. Finding he was perplexed and embarrassed, they good-humouredly turned the conversation to their own affairs; and, to account for their being out so late that evening, informed him, that Mr. Harrison, to whom Mr. Barrymore was a guardian, was just of age; and the other guardians had appointed to meet him the next morning, at B——: and, the letter not reaching him till that day before dinner, he had resolved to set out in the afternoon, much to the disappointment of young Harrison, who was very unwilling to leave the party assembled at Ravenhurst; and therefore gladly availed himself of

Mr.

Mr. Thornborough's phaeton, promising to return with it early enough the next morning to accompany the Barrymores to B——.

On his arrival at fir James Wilmot's, he found the company at cards. He explained the events of their little journey, his reason for returning, and made our hero's apologies for not fulfilling his engagement; and then, in a whisper to a few, mentioned the circumstances of his being detained by a young child, and his own surmises on the occasion. Not that he whispered with a wish, or view, of its being kept a secret; but merely to give himself the importance of knowing more than the rest of the world, which, had he spoken openly on the subject,

ject, would have been lost in the idea that he was merely telling a piece of common news. Those to whom he gave the information, received it with different sensations; some with surprise, some with regret, but more with pleasure, arising from that insatiable desire of having something to wonder at and enquire about, which vacant minds ever feel. He staid not to breakfast at Ravenhurst, but arrived at the Crown just in time to take one cup of tea with the party he had left there. Mr. Barrymore was very impatient to be gone; and they set out immediately, leaving our hero to consider what plan he must pursue.

The last evening and this morning had impressed upon his mind a higher

idea, than he had ever entertained before, of the perfections of miss Barrymore. Her delicacy, her good humour, her frankness, candour, vivacity, and superior understanding, had all appeared in the fullest and most amiable point of view; and he wished Letitia Wilding was equally attractive: but immediately checking that wish, as improper to indulge, he began his melancholy walk to the village.

The woman who was entrusted with the child willingly accepted the handsome gratuity he offered her, to accompany him to London, and take care of it till it was once more restored to its mother. He then desired her to hire a close cart, and go with it to B—— immediately,

mediately, giving her money for her present expences, and a direction to a second-rate inn, where he promised to take her up in a post-chaise the moment he could conveniently pursue his journey.

Having settled this to his satisfaction, he re-mounted his phaeton, and drove to Ravenhurst, where his excuses were received with much raillery and mirth. He bore them with perfect good humour, and, telling sir James he trusted time would enable him to disclose the truth, took leave, and returned to B—. He found the waters at Highford much abated, and had the satisfaction of learning that the Barrymores, as well as the nurse and child, went through without danger, and without apprehension. On

his arrival, he directly waited on miss Wilding, to acquaint her with his intended journey. But before I relate what passed in this interview, I must return to Ravenhurst, to enable my readers to account for what followed.

C H A P. IX.

AMONG the party at fir James Wilmot's, was a Mr. Willis, an eminent attorney at B——, the father of two handsome daughters, who were rivals to the Wildings; for, moving exactly in the same sphere, their interests often clashed: and as Mr. Willis had, undoubtedly, the best fortune, he imagined himself greatly superior to the other, a superiority, however, which Mr. Wilding never allowed, as his birth and connections were much better. From this mean kind of jealousy, Mr. Willis had been greatly piqued at the visible

preference paid by the two elegant strangers to the miss Wildings: nor were his daughters less hurt; and they now failed not to avail themselves of an opportunity which offered to disconcert and mortify Letitia.

This gentleman was engaged at whist when Mr. Harrison entered the drawing-room; and, not being in the number of his friends among whom he circulated the story of our hero and his little protégée, he could only gather, from the imperfect hints he heard, that Mr. Godfrey, as he was called, had remained at the Crown, to spend the evening with the Barrymores, in preference to coming to Ravenhurst. Several smiles were seen on the countenances of the ladies,
and

and several half-uttered jests passed between the gentlemen; all which he considered as proofs that our hero was faithless to his first engagement, and was now paying his devoirs to Sophia Barrymore. This young lady, from being seldom at B——, spending her winters in London, where she moved in the very first circles, and from the unquestionable advantages she possessed, both in birth, fortune, beauty and merit, was too far above them to inspire that envy which is seldom excited but by our equals. Her conquest, therefore, in the present instance, gave them no sensation but pleasure, arising from miss Wilding's supposed disappointment: and when Mr. Willis related these circumstances to his daughters, on his return in the morning, they

seized the occasion with avidity; and, impelled by the ill-natured motive of hoping to distress Letitia, resolved to pay her a visit.

When they were seated, and a few common compliments and some general conversation had passed, "Pray," said miss Willis, "where is your beau, Mr. Godfrey?"

"My beau, as you are pleased to call him," replied miss Wilding, with an affected air, "is now at sir James Wilmot's, where he is to stay a few days."

"Oh dear, no," said miss Willis, "I believe you are misinformed, madam; he
is

is not at Ravenhurst, I can assure you ;
for——”

“ I do not know, madam, who can be so well informed as myself, where he is,” interrupted miss Wilding, colouring violently, and drawing up her head.

“ Nay, miss Wilding, but mine is the best authority in the world. My father came from Ravenhurst not an hour since. Mr. Godfrey was expected there, it is true, last night; but he did not arrive.”

“ Not arrive!” cried Letitia. “ What could have possibly detained him?”

“ Oh, you need not be so much alarmed ; I promise you he met with no accident, but was well, and happy enough no doubt.”

“ Will you condescend to explain your meaning, miss Willis ?”

“ Yes, certainly. Mr. Harrison, who went away early in the afternoon, with his guardian, returned just before supper, telling sir James the waters were so much out they could not go on ; and that Mr. Godfrey staid with the Barrymores at the Crown, and had sent him back to make his excuses ; a task he gladly undertook, as it gave him a plea for returning to a party he was so unwilling to leave. A great many witty things were said,
about

about Mr. Godfrey's choosing to stay, that my father cannot remember ; but all that I have related he is perfectly clear in."

The manner in which this intelligence was conveyed, as well as the intelligence itself, had too deep an effect on Letitia; she trembled, hesitated, and attempted to speak: but Charlotte, who wanted not spirit, or exertion, when it was necessary, and who, though she loved not her sister with that warmth of affection which a congeniality of sentiment could only inspire, yet could not patiently see her thus visibly mortified; and she replied, with some acrimony,

"I think, miss Willis, your first ques-
G 6 tion,

tion, where Mr. Godfrey now was? was extremely unnecessary, since you could give us the information you pretended to seek."

"I pretended to seek! Really, madam, I do not understand you."

"I am sorry for it, miss Willis, as I wish not to conceal my opinion: therefore, in plain terms, give me leave to add, I *do* understand you. You enquired where Mr. Godfrey was, that you might have the satisfaction—a satisfaction, however, that little minds can only feel—of telling us that he was with miss Barrymore; an event which was far from giving us the pain you intended. We are all intimate with their family; and I
must

must say, Mr. Godfrey would have shewn as much want of taste as spirit, if he had left them to go on to Ravenhurst."

Miss Willis bit her lips with vexation at this spirited retort, which she very little expected; and her sister Maria, who had been a silent witness of this conversation, wishing to restore peace, made some apologies, which the others accepted; and they parted with that cold civility which always precedes the separation of old friends: for Letitia, though she affected to receive their excuses, was yet so seriously angry, and so exalted with the hope of being Mrs. Thornborough, which all their surmises could not totally destroy, that she determined no more to consider them as acquaintance; and was
not

not sorry for so good a plea for breaking with them entirely.

Yet, notwithstanding all her sister had said, she was a little uneasy at what they told her; an uneasiness which was greatly increased by the entrance of the person in question, in his morning dress, upon his telling her he came to take leave of her for a few days, being obliged to go to London, on particular business, that afternoon.

“To London, Mr. Godfrey!” returned Letitia, with evident concern: “not to night, I hope. If you have any regard for my peace and happiness, defer your journey till to-morrow, and
go

go with us this evening to Mrs. Burlington's."

"If," replied he, "it was in my power, you may believe I would stay; but I fear it is not possible: however, if I can contrive to put it off, you may depend upon meeting me. But my visit to London will, probably, be so short, you will scarcely miss me."

Miss Wilding, piqued at his not complying more willingly with what she thought a very reasonable request, then desired to know why he had not been at Ravenhurst the day before, when he left B—— with that intention.

Unable to confess the truth, and unwilling

willing to tell a falsehood, he only replied (not guessing she had heard any thing which could make his words liable to a misconstruction), "I was unavoidably detained on the road by an unexpected circumstance."

"Unavoidably, Mr. Godfrey !" said Charlotte.

"Yes, madam," repeated he with spirit, "unavoidably."

Letitia now renewed her entreaties, that he would attend her to Mrs. Burlington's, with such earnestness, that he knew not how to refuse ; yet, too resolute to give up a point he thought right, in compliance with a woman's wishes, he
would

would not promise, but again declared it was his wish to oblige her, if possible; and then took leave.

Letitia was but little pleased with this proof that her power over him was not so absolute as she had once hoped; and she felt it now the more forcibly, as she wished to shew the Willises, who she knew were part of the company, that, whatever they might imagine, he had not deserted her. Animated by this hope, and the desire of triumph, she retired to dress, and that day took even more pains than usual to adorn herself, though she was too frequently damped by a fear that it might be all to no purpose.

C H A P. X.

WHEN our hero quitted Mr. Wilding's, he went directly to the Vine; and finding the woman and child arrived, he told her he feared he must give up his intention of proceeding towards London that night, if the difference it would make in her time was not material. She replied, so far from it, she had thought of desiring him to put it off till the morning, lest the night air should be prejudicial to the infant, whose very delicate state required more than common attention. He very readily acquiesced, as he was not sorry to comply with Letitia's earnestly-

earnestly-enforced request; and was pleased with a proof of the nurse's tenderness to the little forlorn creature who had been so strangely entrusted to his care.

He then retired to his lodgings, to dress for his evening's engagement; and having, after this was completed, some time which he knew not how to employ, as his mind was really too disturbed to attend to reading, and his friend was gone out of town, he resolved to call on Mr. Nesbit: but that gentleman being absent, he took a short walk, and then went to Mrs. Burlington's, earlier than the generality of the company assembled.

There he found miss Barrymore; and,
attracted

attracted by her irresistible conversation, he sat by her till summoned to the card-table. There again she was destined to be of his party; and just as they were sitting down, and he was paying her some trifling, but gallant, compliment, on being so fortunate as to draw her for a partner, he looked up, and saw miss Wilding standing just behind, with a countenance on which vexation and anger were so strongly painted, that he felt really embarrassed, though he scarcely knew why, as the events of the morning he was wholly unconscious of.

Turning towards her with an assumed ease, "You see, miss Wilding," said he, "your commands have had a proper effect on me."

"Upon

"Upon my word, sir," she replied, "I have some doubt whether it was my commands, as you are pleased to call them, or those of some other people, which put off your journey, and induced you to come to Mrs. Burlington's."

Mr. Thornborough, not in the least comprehending her speech, nor very anxious to enquire her meaning at that time, made no reply, but began to deal.

Letitia had some reason for her suspicions. The intelligence of the day still fresh in her memory, she guessed he had been influenced by hearing miss Barrymore was to be of the party, and that on her account only he had delayed

layed his journey ; since, had it been in compliance with her entreaties, he might as well have given his promise before they parted. And this opinion was strengthened by her observing, when she entered the room, how earnestly he was attending to her, and how little notice he took of any one else ; and an unfortunate combination of circumstances occurred to confirm it.

Mrs. Burlington had been much distressed to make out her parties, from repeated disappointments ; and had sent to Sophia Barrymore, with whom she was very intimate, only just before dinner ; knowing, though she disliked playing higher than her usual stake, she would do it to oblige a friend. Our hero was

an unexpected, but welcome, reinforcement; and, as she had but five to that table, she requested them to play as long as was agreeable without cutting out, and they assented.

Letitia Wilding, well assured her lover never played from choice, could only imagine he was detained so long at the table by miss Barrymore; and this idea, added to her mortification at the neglect she fancied she experienced, and which the Willises were delighted spectators of, operated so forcibly on her spirits, that, before the conclusion of the third rubber, she fainted away, and was carried out of the room.

The bustle this occasioned reached our
hero,

hero, who, conscious perhaps that he had not acted as he ought, and willing to make reparation, arose instantly, and would have gone to her; but being then, as it is called, in the crisis of the game, his partner, a crabbed old lady, insisted on his sitting down till it was finished.

“And pray, sir,” cried she, “what good can you do in this affair? In my opinion, the fewer people about her the better, and the sooner she will recover. I beg you will mind what you are about.”

He very unwillingly assented. But his spirits were so agitated, by the fear of having added to her indisposition, that
he

he knew not what he did ; and, though usually a good player, he now threw down a wrong card, which instantly decided the rubber in favour of the opposite party. His partner, naturally violent, and having, as she thought, the game secure in her own hand, was extremely irritated at his inattention.

“ So, fir, you have made a fine hand of it. When I had three honours and five trumps to my own share, you must take my queen, upon my word. I am sure, if you go on so, I wonder you can keep your head above water: to play at such a stake as this, and then throw about your cards as if you were playing for a farthing with children. There are people in the world who would be very

angry to lose their money from their partner's carelessness; but, for my part, I do not care a straw for my money; I am only shocked and concerned to see other people throw away theirs in such a manner, when, perhaps, if the truth were known, at another time they might be very glad of it."

This curious harangue he bore with less patience than he would otherwise have done, from his anxiety to be gone: and when it was ended he only bowed, and, paying miss Barrymore, quitted the table, and enquired of Mrs. Burlington how she had left miss Wilding; and heard, to his great regret, she was gone home in a chair.

Instantly

Instantly taking leave, he followed ; and, on his arrival, found her in strong hysterics. The sight of so much beauty as she really possessed, in such affliction on his account, and her love for him, as he believed, so perfectly disinterested, was too much for his feelings ; and, removed from the dangerous influence of Sophia, his heart once more melted with its accustomed tenderness. He threw himself at her feet, and said every thing love could suggest, to soothe her : and having at length succeeded in some degree, he turned to Charlotte, and in a low voice requested her to inform him what had at first occasioned her illness. This she complied with, and in a very few words told him her apprehensions

H 2

with

with respect to miss Barrymore, from the story miss Willis had brought from Ravenhurst, and which was confirmed by his behaviour that evening.

“Forgetting in that moment every thing but her distress, he instantly explained to the dejected Letitia all the circumstances he dared ; mentioned Mrs. Burlington’s embarrassment, as a reason for his playing ; and assured her, on his honour, that, so far from staying from Ravenhurst on account of the Barrymores (though he acknowledged he had passed the evening with them), he was particularly distressed at meeting them at all, for a reason which he hoped in future to have it in his power to explain. That it was the same cause which obliged

ed him to go to town, and in which the Barrymores were entirely unconcerned. And he added, if it would give her the least degree of satisfaction, he would that moment voluntarily swear, neither miss Barrymore, nor any other woman, should ever engage his affection, whilst she remained unmarried, and equally attached to him.

This promise enlivened her so much, that he repeated it once more, and in the most serious manner declared he would never marry any woman but herself; unless she, by preferring some other man, should teach him the road to inconstancy. He said this with a smile; and it was rather intended to make her smile also, than as any evasion he might

ever in future avail himself of. She shook her head, and said faintly, if that was all, there was little doubt of her fidelity.

After staying some time longer, to wait her perfect recovery, he took leave, promising nothing but absolute necessity should detain him in London beyond the time he fixed for his return; and then retired to his lodgings, with that sort of satisfaction a man feels when he has conquered some strong incitements to act improperly, and has taken some sure method to prevent his ever falling into the same danger again. Yet in this instance Mr. Thornborough found self-applause will not always convey happiness: he knew he had now acted from
the

the best motives; but he could not help secretly lamenting he had so precipitately engaged himself, that he could not now recede with honour; and he severely condemned the ridiculous delicacy which had induced him to act with so much duplicity.

“In my own character,” cried he, “I might have pretended to miss Barrymore; and, if I have any knowledge, her virtues and merits would have rendered me completely happy: but, fool that I was, I am entangled in my own snare, and have myself wove the net that has undone me.” Then suddenly checking these ideas, he endeavoured to turn them upon other things; but in vain. After a sleepless night he arose; and the car-

riage coming to the door, he got in; and, calling at the Vine for the nurse and child, he set off towards London with the utmost expedition.

"In my own character," cried he, "I might have pretended to miss Barymore; and, if I have any knowledge, her virtues and merits would have rendered me completely happy: but, fool that I was, I was entangled in my own plans, and have myself wove the net that has undone me. I then falsely charged this idea, he endeavoured to turn them to other things; but in vain. A few strokes might be made; and the carriage

CHAP.

C H A P. XI.

NOTHING material happened during their journey; and when they reached town, Mr. Thornborough, leaving the woman and child at the inn, took a hackney-coach, and ordered it to No. —, Fleet-street. It stopped at a very large linen-draper's shop; and, after being assured it was the right number, he discharged the coach, and going in requested to speak with the master or mistress of the house. A very genteel man, between forty and fifty, now made his appearance; and on our hero's desiring to speak with him alone, he was

shewn up stairs, into a handsome drawing-room. But how to introduce the subject he could not tell. A thousand ideas had crowded into his mind, from his first entering the house. Sometimes he supposed this gentleman might be the father : but, on recollecting the young lady had said the child would be received, and no questions asked, he rather imagined it was some friend ; and, not doubting but she had mentioned his name, thought, by introducing himself, the gentleman would understand him.

“ Probably, sir,” said he, “ as I am an entire stranger to you, you will not guess why I waited on you at present, till I have informed you my name is Thornborough.”

Th

The gentleman bowed, but remained silent.

"You have heard of the name?"

"Yes, sir; Mr. Thornborough of Berkshire, I presume."

"You are right; and I now come, sir, at the request of the lady whose name I am ignorant of, but who mentioned mine to you, to deliver up the charge she entrusted me with: and I hope I have acquitted myself to her satisfaction and yours, as I have the pleasure of adding the child is in good health."

The suspicions which the embarrassed manner of our hero had at first raised in

Mr. Bentworth, were dissipated on hearing the name of Thornborough, to which he was no stranger, having a relation married within a few miles of the Abbey. But apprehensions of a different kind were excited by his last speech. He knew Mr. Thornborough had been laughed at in his own neighbourhood for his very singular turn of mind; and he now supposed that singularity had arisen from a flightiness, which indulgence had probably heightened into absolute distraction; as he could in no way understand what he alluded to by the lady or the child.

Concealing, however, his suspicions, he answered very gravely, he feared there was some mistake, as no lady had mentioned

mentioned his name to him, nor did he expect any child. He had, he said, a large family of his own; but they were all either at school, or under his own roof.

Mr. Thornborough then, with great clearness, related to him the whole adventure he had met with, which in the present circumstances he thought himself justified in doing; though he trembled every moment at the idea of discovering to a mortified and feeling heart the disgrace of some unhappy and guilty female nearly connected with him. But, on the contrary, Mr. Bentworth, who had now given up the idea of his wildness, heard him with the utmost attention,

tion, but without any distress; and, when he had concluded, replied,

“Upon my word, sir, this is a very perplexing affair; and I fear your humanity has betrayed you into some inconveniences: but perhaps you have mistaken the number.”

“Oh no,” returned our hero, earnestly; “in that I am very clear.”

“I am truly sorry for it,” said Mr. Bentworth; “for, upon my honour, I know nothing of the matter. I have no female relation but a sister, whom you must have seen at Oakburn. She is several years older than myself, and has no children. All my wife’s family are
West-

West Indians, and none of them at present in England : therefore, my dear sir, you see the impossibility of my being any way concerned; as even supposing a letter, with a hint of this kind, could have miscarried, there is no person who could have thought of trusting me with an affair of this consequence."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed our hero, "what shall I do? Will you, my dear sir, advise me what method to pursue?"

Mr. Bentworth paused; and then said, "The only chance you ever have of discovering the mother is, by meeting her accidentally; in public, however, it must be, for in private she will undoubtedly

doubtedly avoid you : for I very much fear her principal motive in entrusting the child to your care, was to rid herself of a burden and a disgrace ; and I must say, I fancy she means never again to claim it."

"Then," cried Mr. Thornborough, "she has most thoroughly completed her purpose : I shall never know her again ; it was almost dark when we met ; and the few moments we passed together, and her being extremely wrapped up, would have rendered it impossible for me to recollect her, had it been in the middle of the day. I have therefore now only to see the child properly taken care of ; and, as it is innocent, and doubly to be pitied for having such an unnatural mother,

ther, I will never forsake it. Yet at this time the circumstance is peculiarly unfortunate. I am myself on the point of marriage; and have hitherto, in consequence of my promise, concealed the reasons for this journey; and have not mentioned how the infant came into my possession. Tell me, Mr. Bentworth, do you not think the lady's duplicity will so far absolve me, now it is thrown wholly on my hands, that I may, without a breach of honour, inform her to whom I shall soon be accountable for my conduct, of the whole of this affair? But to those who are unconcerned, I shall make a point of not revealing it."

"You judge very properly," returned Mr. Bentworth, "and very humanely.

ly. I fancy the lady, whoever she is, knew your character well enough; and she will not be deceived. But if I can in any respect assist your enquiries, or contribute to your peace, I beg you will command me."

Our hero thanked him very warmly for his politeness, and then took leave. On his return to the inn, he told the nurse he must trespass still farther on her time, as he should now be obliged to carry the child into Berkshire; but recollecting, during his journey thither, they must not go on to Thornborough Abbey, lest she should discover his real name, he drove to a private inn at Reading, where he was not known; and, leaving them, proceeded in a post-chaise

to

to his own seat. He was there welcomed by his servants with unfeigned satisfaction. But they had scarcely time to express their joy, before he took the housekeeper into the parlour; and informing her of as many of the circumstances as it was necessary for her to know, he took her back in the carriage, ordering her by no means to mention his name to the woman, but receive the child, and ask no questions; and then, taking it with her to the Abbey, procure a nurse in the neighbourhood, and provide it with all things necessary. He also desired she would call on it from time to time, and observe it was properly taken care of. She promised to obey all his commands with the utmost punctuality, though she could scarcely conceal her

her astonishment at this strange event, and the secrecy he required.

He then enquired if Mr. Fitzwilliam's family were then at the Park; and being answered in the negative, he had no wish to remain another hour in Berkshire: and having seen the child in the house-keeper's care, he ordered the chaise, and returned instantly to London; where having paid the nurse handsomely for her trouble, and given her besides money for her expences home, the next morning, very early, he set out himself on his return to B——.

In the mean time, with hands and eyes uplifted, Mrs. Jenkins arrived at the Abbey with her little charge. The servants were

were soon collected round her, whilst she related to them all her master had told her, which was just enough to raise suspicion into certainty that it was his own. It had struck our hero whilst on the road, that, in all probability, from the extreme wish of concealing her shame, which its mother's strange conduct so evidently proved, she had never had it baptised. He had therefore particularly ordered Mrs. Jenkins, thinking it a most essential point, to have it christened by the name of Mary-Anne Smith, as the most common surname he could recollect; for he thought it too probable the poor infant would never know that which she had really a right to.

Mrs. Jenkins, who was a very good
woman,

woman, executed her commission with punctuality. The little girl was carried to church, where herself, one of the house-maids, and the gardener, stood sponsors; and the wife of the latter took it home to her own house, which was so near the Abbey, the house-keeper, or some of the other servants, could visit it every day: and the whole family in a short time became really fond of it, from regarding it as their master's, whose extreme good humour, generosity, and benevolence, had entirely gained the affections of his domestics and tenants, even when the singularity of his character had excited their wonder and pity.

C H A P. XII.

THE last stage before his arrival at B——, Mr. Thornborough took a post-chaise, and ordered the postillion, instead of entering the town, to turn off before he came to the turnpike-gate on the cross road towards Ravenhurst. He alighted at the Crown, and, discharging the carriage, he hired a horse, and determined to find out, if possible, from whence the lady and child came. He went to every village for several miles round; but his enquiries were ineffectual, though he stopped at every house where
such

such a circumstance was likely to be known as a lady's lying-in privately.

Almost tired of his fruitless search, he thought of returning, when his horse losing a shoe obliged him to go to a blacksmith's, which was a little out of the direct road, and where he was very civilly invited by the woman into the house, whilst her husband was replacing the shoe. There was an air of uncommon neatness in this little cottage, that attracted his particular attention; and whilst observing this, he was struck by seeing a book, elegantly bound, lying on one of the shelves. But how was his astonishment increased, when, on opening it, he discovered it to be a volume of Rousseau's *Eloise*! He turned to the
woman,

woman, and, with a smile he could scarcely suppress, asked if she or her husband ever read in that book.

“ Lackaday, no, fir,” said she; “ we hav’n’t had un long : our Mary brought un here t’other day, for master and I to read in a Sundays ; because we be so far from church ’t isn’t often we can get to go.”

A pretty Sunday’s amusement, thought our hero. “ But pray,” continued he, “ how came the person you speak of by the book ? Was it given her, or did she buy it ?”

“ Why, I’ll tell you,” replied she, lowering her voice into a whisper. “ You

must know, fir, 'twas left there by a lady, who lodged with my daughter for some weeks : and though her house is not so good as mine, I believe the lady was glad enough to be there; for, poor soul, I don't know what she would have done else."

She spoke in a tone of importance, that made our hero hope he might now gain the intelligence he wished for. He would not, therefore, interrupt her, and she thus continued :

" So, fir, she and her child—only think of a poor babe, not five weeks old, travelling such weather—went off about a week ago; and our Mary, rummaging out the house, found this here

book :

book : so as she ha'n't time for reading (though she can read, I assure you ; for I put her to school here at Burton, for a matter of I don't know how long) : so she brought un to us, because her father and I do love reading ; for my master had quite a good edication, and larnt a power of things, though he be now but a blacksmith."

Mr. Thornborough finding she was inclined to talk of her own affairs principally, and fancying he should have more certain information at her daughter's, determined to go there ; and enquiring where she lived, the woman, as he was re-mounting his horse, pointed out to his view a little cottage at some distance, on the side of a hill, but which

was so well concealed from general observation by a thick wood, that part of the thatched roof and the chimneys only were visible to him, even when his eye was directed to the spot; and it must to a common traveller pass quite unnoticed.

He then told her, if she would let him have the book, he would pay her its value, and send her also some which would much better answer her's and her husband's purpose for Sunday reading: for though he supposed them too ignorant to have their principles vitiated by the dangerous tenets it contains, yet he thought there was a possibility of its falling into the hands of those, who had sense enough to understand, but not strength

strength of mind to resist, the precepts so artfully introduced, under the mask of sentiment, and in the semblance of virtue. She very gladly assented to his proposal, and he took leave, directing his way towards the house of her daughter.

The young woman appeared at the door of the cottage, when his horse stopped; and fastening it to a hedge, he followed her in, and, holding some money in his hand, told her, in a few words, he would amply reward her, if she would give him all the information in her power respecting the young lady and infant who had so lately left her.

The poor woman eyed the silver with

surprise and delight; and, rubbing her hands on her apron, and holding them out, said, to be sure it went against her conscience to blab, when she had been paid for holding her tongue; but what could she do in these hard times. "So, sir," continued she, pocketting the money, "I'll tell you all I know of the matter. 'Twas a good while ago that a fine young gentleman, just such another as your honour, came to me, and asked if I could lodge a lady the whilst she laid in, and nurse her myself, and not make a tattling amongst my neighbours. Bless ye, sir, says I, who should I tattle to, d'ye think, when there is n't a creature in a mile of me? So I promised; for a said he'd pay me handsomely for my trouble; and so to be sure he did. Well, I
 puts

puts my little cottage in order, and miss came, all alone though; and she did nothing but cry till she was brought to bed, and then she would not bear the poor babe in her sight: and 'tis my belief she'd a been glad if it had died. So when she got up and about, she did use to tell me I should have the child to nurse. But one day the gentleman came to see her, and they had a high quarrel about it; for he said he would have the child himself, and get a nurse for it near his own house; and he would meet her on the road, and take it away, so that nobody might know nothing of the matter. And then miss she cried: but he said he'd never see her again, if she did not bring the child. So she promised; and he went away that night; and miss

and the baby set off here last week, in all that rain. I am sure I was so sorry nothing could be like it: but you know, sir, what could I do?"

* Our hero then asked if she knew her name, or his, or from whence they came; or if she had left any thing behind except the book, which he shewed her. To all these questions she replied in the negative: and finding this was all the intelligence he was likely to receive, he quitted the cottage, and returned instantly to B——.

He sent, on his arrival, a message to Mr. Wilding's: but hearing the family had all dined out of town, he strolled to a bookseller's, where he made his intended

ed purchase for the blacksmith's wife : and having given orders for its being sent, he was going to his own lodgings ; but meeting Mr. Nesbit accidentally, was easily prevailed on to accompany him home ; and having promised to spend the remainder of the evening with him, they entered into a familiar and unre-served conversation.

“ Well, fir,” said Mr. Nesbit, “ is it not as I told you ? Have you not met with many antediluvian ladies since our first meeting ? And will you not acknowledge Mrs. L——, Mrs. M——, and Mrs. S——, are all girls of sixty or seventy years of age ? Though I must say the former has more good nature
I 5 than

than Hilpa; for she would not let a lover languish ten years without hope."

Mr. Thornborough replied, with a smile, that what he had asserted was too true. The other continued.

"Mrs. Barrymore, though not a young woman, falls into none of these ridiculous improprieties. Without affecting singularity (which I know is wrong, though I am singular enough myself), she complies with the fashion in a way at once proper and becoming."

"She is indeed," answered our hero, "a most amiable woman; and her niece——"

"Her

"Her niece," interrupted Mr. Nesbit, "is every thing a young woman of fashion can or ought to be : and her character, though so superior to the rest of her sex, yet gives her no arrogance, no affected superiority. You have doubtless heard from the Wildings the history of this charming girl, and her disinterested conduct."

"No," cried Mr. Thornborough, "I never have ; nor knew I there was any thing in her character, or conduct, except that propriety, that grace, gentleness, benevolence, and good sense, which is sufficiently obvious to all who have the honour of her acquaintance."

“ I am surpris'd you were never informed—or rather,” added he, recollecting himself, “ I am not surpris'd ; she would have been a too dangerous rival. But now, sir, if you will indulge a garrulous old man on his favourite theme, I will relate, as concisely as I can, the principal circumstances to which I allude ; though, to do it with clearness, I must go back to the grandfather of the young lady in question.”

Our hero assuring him he could not be more highly obliged and gratified, Mr. Nesbit began in the following manner.

CHAP.

C H A P. XIII.

"SIR James Barrymore, Sophia's grandfather, was a baronet of one of the first families in England ; a circumstance on which he set so high a value, that, not having a fortune equal to his ambition, he determined to aggrandize his eldest son, the present sir Philip, at the expence of the younger, whom he intended to place in the army with a very moderate provision, that his whole estate might descend unincumbered to the other. Charles Barrymore, very much piqued at this unjust determination, objected to entering the army, unless his father would
allow

allow him such a share of his present fortune as would enable him to appear in a style not unbecoming the son and brother of a baronet : but with this sir James did not choose to comply ; and affecting displeasure at his refusal, to avoid all further solicitations, gave him what he had designed, and bade him choose what profession he pleased. He was not long in fixing, but soon placed himself with an eminent merchant in London ; a step which so completely irritated both the haughty baronet and his heir, that he was for many years considered as an alien to his family, and kept up no kind of intercourse with them.

“ Philip, in compliance with his father’s wishes, married lady Mary, the youngest daughter

daughter of the earl of S—, with whom he had twenty thousand pounds. But the peer, aware of his son-in-law's extravagant disposition, which already appeared but too plainly, insisted on its being all settled on younger children. Sophia is however the only child they ever had. Sir James soon after this marriage died, without ever having seen or forgiven his youngest son, who had still farther disobliged him by uniting himself to a most accomplished and amiable young woman (as I believe you will allow Mrs. Barrymore must have been), with a very large fortune, the only child of his master's partner, a man of excellent character, but low extraction : a circumstance which tempted him to overlook Charles Barrymore's want of fortune, as
he

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he

he wished to be connected with so ancient and so respectable a family. In consequence of this marriage, he surrendered to him his share of the business, and in the course of a few years Charles succeeding to the other half, became master of an opulent fortune, which was every day increasing. But his father's continued resentment, and his dying without having ever seen him, gave him a deep wound, and was the only thing which ever disturbed his domestic felicity; and having entertained an idea, whether just or not I cannot pretend to say, that his brother purposely kept up the implacability of sir James, this coldness was not likely to end with his death. But retaining in his own character just enough of the pride of birth to support his own consequence,

consequence, and thinking, as sir Philip had never any other child, the title must come to him, though the estate might not, he determined not to breed up his son in the mercantile line, but sent him to Oxford, and afterwards on his travels, as the present reputed heir to the title.

“ In the mean time sir Philip and his lady pursued a very different mode of conduct: naturally of an extravagant turn, and losing all check by the death of his own father and the earl of S—, and mortified at having no son, he gave way to the most unbounded dissipation, and his lady ardently pursuing the same career of folly, they were in a few years so much involved, that a retirement to the continent was necessary; and they had

no

no family ties to prevent their immediate execution of this plan, as Sophia was at a private school about ten miles from London, and had been so little at home, that she had contracted an affection for her governess superior to what she could feel for her mother, who had taken very little notice of her, as her continual engagements at the card-table left her no time to fulfil domestic duties.

“During sir Philip and lady Mary’s residence abroad, it happened that Mrs. Barrymore called to see a young lady at Mrs. Haviland’s. Her niece, with whose person she was utterly unacquainted, happened to be in the room, and struck with her beauty and elegance, she asked her name; and on hearing it was Barrymore, expressed

expressed her surprise, as she believed her to be abroad with her parents. When miss Lee entered the parlour, and the little Sophia found the strange lady was that very aunt to whom, from miss Lee's representation of her very amiable qualities, she had long wished to be known, she burst into tears, and running up to her, threw her arms round her neck. This affectionate expression of joy had a natural effect on her aunt; she returned her embrace with tenderness, and desired Mrs. Haviland's permission to take her home for a few days, a request which, having received no orders to the contrary, she readily granted. In this short week she made so deep an impression on the hearts both of Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, was so grateful for their kindness,

ness, and so sensible of a tenderness she had never before experienced, that they began to feel a very strong affection for her, which increased on every visit she paid them, as her sense and merit grew every hour more apparent; and from this time she spent all her holidays constantly with them.

“This happy life continued till she was seventeen, when in one of the few letters she received from lady Mary, she insisted upon her going no more to her uncle Barrymore’s; that whilst she was a child it was very well; but that she had written to her brother the earl of S—, desiring his lady would introduce her into the world; and she hoped all her future leisure from her education would be devoted

voted to them. Poor Sophia was extremely disconcerted at this command, which she could in no way evade, as her governess had letters to the same effect. From a principle of delicacy, she for some time avoided acquainting her uncle and aunt with this absurd and cruel injunction; but at length, to exculpate herself from the charge of ingratitude, she was obliged to confess the reason of her absence. They were both concerned and piqued at this proof of unabated pride and excessive folly; and Mrs. Barrymore took leave of her niece in a kind of tender despair, supposing she should never again enjoy her society in the manner she had formerly done: though Sophia repeatedly assured her, if ever she

was

was her own mistress, nothing should interrupt her visits to them.

“In a short time lady S. called on Sophia, and took her to Grosvenor-square, and was so highly pleased with her sweetness of temper, and so proud of her beauty and accomplishments, that, having no daughters of her own, and her sons being all dispersed, she wrote to sir Philip, requesting Sophia might entirely leave Mrs. Haviland, and reside with her till their return : a request sir Philip and lady Mary gladly assented to.

“Now, sir, you see miss Barrymore in the highest circles of fashion, with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, introduced at court, admired, courted, toasted,

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toasted, followed by the beaux, envied but imitated by the belles, and engaged in all the luxury and dissipation of fashionable life: but even in these scenes, which are too apt to render the heart callous to all the finer feelings, hers was too grateful, too generous, to forget the early friends of her infancy. The moment she knew by a letter from Mrs. Barrymore, with whom she kept up a constant correspondence, of their arrival in town, she informed the countess of her extreme anxiety to see them. Lady S. had herself none of that ridiculous pride which distinguished the rest of the family, and had too much good sense not to respect and honour the character of a British merchant, when in that character was united the man of birth, educa-

tion, sense and integrity; and she not only approved of her intention, but accompanied her, and requested Mrs. Barrymore, in the politest manner, that she would allow the connection there was between their families to lead to a friendship which miss Barrymore's residence with them, and she hoped she might say affection for both parties, would contribute to strengthen.

“ Mrs. Barrymore was delighted with this unexpected condescension, but more from the hope of frequently seeing her beloved niece, than the mere gratification of her pride : yet she could not be insensible of the sweet and amiable qualities of the countess, who, in the true spirit of benevolence, always encouraged
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C H A P. XIV.

“WHEN lord Hartland, the earl’s eldest son, returned from his travels, his heart remained not insensible of the charms of his lovely cousin. His parents approved of the attachment, and he met with no opposition but from Sophia herself, whose elegant mind and cultivated understanding refused to acknowledge a master in one who possessed no quality but good humour to render him estimable, and not any for which he could be respectable. Vain of his person and rank, and weak in his intellects almost to folly, he was easily led by those whose
interest

interest it was to corrupt his morals; and the consequences of his indolent disposition had been such, that he followed vice more because it was the fashion than from any other motive. But in his love for Sophia he appeared to lose his rage for dissipation, a circumstance which made lady S—, who knew the influence a woman of sense and principle often has on the heart of a young man deeply attached, still more anxious for the match: but Miss Barrymore so steadily refused her consent, that her ladyship found all entreaties were useless, and at length gave up the point.

“Before lord Hartland’s return, Sophia had attended Mrs. Barrymore to Bristol, where she continued for many weeks in

a doubtful state. Her health was at last restored; though I have often heard her say, she attributed it as much to the constant attentions of her niece, as to the Bristol waters; and one circumstance, though apparently trifling, yet at this time endeared her more than ever to her aunt. She had long been engaged to accompany a nobleman's family, with whom she was extremely intimate, to their castle in the north of England, where she was to spend the summer. A thousand amusements had been devised, particularly theatrical ones; and she was on the point of setting out, when the news of Mrs. Barrymore's illness arrived. This instantly altered her plan; she excused herself to the duke's family, and obtaining permission of lady S—, went
down

down to Mr. Barrymore's country seat, and from thence with them to the Hot Wells.

“ Whilst lord Hartland fatigued her with solicitations, she often sought a relief from his importunities under their roof, where her time always passed tranquilly and happily; and it was in one of these visits she first heard of her mother's decease. This event, which however she could not deeply feel, hastened her return to Grosvenor-square; as she learned at the same time her father was to attend lady Mary's remains to England, to be deposited in the family vault of their ancestors.

“ When he arrived, and all due solemnities

ties had been paid, he turned his thoughts towards his daughter ; and having been informed of lord Hartland's attachment, he very strenuously urged her to accept his hand, and even threatened her with his constant displeasure, if she dared refuse : as an additional motive, he told her, that her fortune, which his lordship had offered to resign to him, would clear all his estates, and enable him to return to his native country, from which her disobedience would still keep him an exile. Sophia was extremely shocked at this unjustifiable request, yet determined in this instance never to comply with what would render her miserable for life : she began to meditate whether by some other step she could not make his circumstances

cumstances easy, and thus secure his affection and her own liberty.

“The twenty thousand pounds settled by her grandfather, the earl, of course centred wholly in her; and, as by the settlement she was to receive it on her mother’s death, it was now in her own power. Animated by a romantic spirit of generosity, impelled by an idea that if she loved her father as truly as in duty she ought to do, she would give up every other consideration for the pleasure of detaining him in England, and actuated by a wish of releasing herself from solicitations which it pained her very soul to refuse, though she could never grant; she instantly, without asking any advice, had a deed of gift made out, by which

she resigned every thing to her father, and the next time he represented to her the misery and regret her refusal of lord Hartland cost him, she presented him the paper.

“Wholly deficient in generosity himself, though much struck at this proof of her liberality and confidence in him, he had the meanness to accept it, assuring her at the same time she would be no loser, as he hoped this would redeem so much of his paternal property, that in a few years he might be able to repay her, and that at his death all his estates would descend to her, as he did not intend any part of them should go with the title, except the manor of Brooklands, which was entailed.

“But

“But however good his resolutions were then, he had not strength of mind to adhere to them, but mixing again in the gay world, his fortune was again impaired, and a rage for gaming completed its destruction. Even during his residence in France, the spirit of expence had been unconquerable; and from the various temptations England threw in his way, his estate was again mortgaged to its full value, and he once more retired to the continent, without any other support than what the rents of Brooklands afforded him. Sophia with a true filial duty would have attended him in his exile: but that he would not permit; he was too conscious of having completely ruined her, to deprive her of the only

resource she now had in the kindness of her uncle and aunt Barrymore.

“ On his first arrival in England she had quitted the house of lord S—; and though now pressed to return to it, she felt the impropriety of risking a renewed attachment in lord Hartland, which her absence had lessened, but could not wholly conquer. But she wanted not an asylum; her beloved friends the Barrymores received her with delight, and with them she has continued ever since. Sir Philip is still abroad, undergoing, I fancy, a pretty severe penance for his former irregularities. Charles Barrymore is not yet returned from his travels, and it is whispered the cousins are to marry. I know he is a fine elegant young man; but

but how far the report is true I cannot determine."

"Was Mr. Charles Barrymore at home during her residence with them?" asked our hero with some emotion.

"Let me see," replied Mr. Nesbit : "she was ten years old when her aunt first saw her at Mrs. Haviland's : for the seven following she was frequently at their house; but then he was at school or college, and continued at Oxford, except during the vacation, till within a short time of her father's return : he was then sent on his travels. Sir Philip finished himself in nine or ten months, and she has lived with her uncle about twelve. A word or two more, and I have done.

Mr. Barrymore has had an estate in this neighbourhood for many years: he bought it at the request of his lady, who has several relations in and round B——, and though all in a genteel line, yet there are none of them equal to her either in fortune or situation. Their wish of being near their niece whilst she continued either with lord S— or her father, was an inducement to them to spend their winters in London; but as Mr. Barrymore is not fond of the noise and bustle they were there engaged in, and as they have no longer the same reasons, they determined to pass this at B——, and only go up for a short time in the spring. The whole family, as you must have often observed, are extremely affable, and though accustomed, particularly miss Barrymore,

Barrymore, to higher circles, yet they mix with the utmost ease and good humour in the society this place affords. Yet surely the most indifferent spectator must observe the striking superiority of Sophia to every woman in the place. Our most beautiful and fashionable ladies can only be called genteel women; but in her there is a grace, a dignity, a something not to be described, but which every one must feel. I have often wondered, Godfrey, that your friend Thornborough, with his fortune, had not thought of addressing her, instead of one of the Wildings: but there is no accounting for taste, and after all I don't believe she would have accepted him; for between friends I have heard it whispered that you were the favourite there."

"I a

"I a favourite!" interrupted our hero, in the utmost surprise and confusion.

"Yes, you, my dear lad : but we had better not talk of that now ; you are engaged another way ; and if you were not, her uncle would scarcely let her carry a knapsack."

Mr. Thornborough sighed, and thanked him for the narrative, and the other continued :

"All the particulars I have related I know to be facts, as I had them from the family. And now tell me what you think of the young lady ; does she not deserve every epithet I bestowed upon her ?"

"Oh

"Oh yes," returned our hero with energy, "she does indeed; she cannot have a superior, and scarcely an equal in the world; with such personal, such mental attractions, and such advantages of birth, so free from pride and vanity, and so unconscious of her superiority."

"Well done, young man," cried Mr. Nesbit: "but if miss Wilding heard these encomiums, what would she say?"

The name of Wilding flashed upon his soul like lightning, which serves only to discover to the bewildered traveller the horrors of his way. He started up, shook Mr. Nesbit hastily by the hand, and retired to his lodgings, in a state of mind he had never before experienced.

Learning

Learning from the servants that Mr. Godfrey was returned to B—, but had been absent the whole day with the Wildings, he went to bed immediately, to avoid conversation which his present frame of mind unfitted him for: but his own reflections were more than he could well support; he reprobated the romantic folly which had induced him to change his name, and appear in a character and situation so much inferior to his own; he blamed his precipitate rashness in thus hastily engaging himself to a woman who had no peculiar attractions, and whose disinterested regard was her only recommendation.

“And is not,” cried he mentally, “miss Barrymore disinterested? has she not proved

proved it in the highest degree? and in my own character might I not have aspired to her hand? She would not perhaps have refused me; if Mr. Nesbit's hints are well founded, I am sure she would not: but now I am for ever prevented even from hope; and how I despise myself, and in what a despicable light shall I appear to the world, when I confess the mean part I have acted!"

In there self-upbraidings, and the reflections which naturally sprang from them, he spent the night, and arose in the morning unrefreshed, discomposed, and looking forward to the events of the day with a mixture of fear and resentment he knew not how to conquer. His mind, naturally ingenuous, had long disliked

liked the part he had been led into acting; but now that it was inconsistent with his happiness, it became absolutely insupportable.

CHAP.

C H A P. XV.

I MUST now relate the events which had passed at B—— during our hero's absence, and previous to that inform my readers, that the very afternoon he set out on his intended visit to sir James Wilmot's, his friend Godfrey had been called away by business of a most pressing, disagreeable, and unexpected nature. The fact was, he had received letters from a person to whom he owed five hundred pounds, demanding instant payment, or threatening him with an arrest; an event which would have so wholly disconcerted his plans, that he
saw

saw the necessity of taking every measure to prevent it. Leaving, therefore, an excuse for Mr. Thornborough, who he knew had not curiosity enough to endeavour to penetrate into the motive, he set off for the town, about fifty miles from B——, where his creditor waited his answer; and having somewhat pacified him by assurances of his being very soon to marry a young lady of fortune, telling him her name, and promising he should be paid the first, he suffered him to depart, intending, however, to set a spy over his actions, lest he should endeavour to give him the slip; and he arrived again at B—— the very evening of the day in which our hero set off for London with the little unknown.

The

The following morning Godfrey, having now no time to lose, waited on miss Charlotte Wilding, and in the most express terms again offered her his hand, laying, however, for very obvious reasons, no stress upon his fortune ; and desired a determinate answer, which, such was his vanity, he doubted not, in spite of all her evasions, would be a favourable one.

Acting, in consequence of the hint from Mr. Littleton, with a degree of duplicity she disliked, Charlotte, after thanking him for his good opinion, addressed him in the following manner :

“ Bred up, Mr. Thornborough, by an aunt, whose opinions were singular,
and

and totally different from the generality of the world, I have imbibed ideas of propriety and happiness, which, as the prejudices of education are seldom conquered, I think I shall never forget. Your fortune is by far superior to my wishes. I am not ambitious. A heart wholly my own, though its master had only a competence, has the best chance of succeeding with me. You have often pressed to know my reasons for refusing you : now hear them, and let what I say be sufficient. I never will consent to receive the hand of one whose heart has been, to my knowledge, previously engaged to another, as yours was to my sister.—Do not yet interrupt me (perceiving he was going to speak), nor imagine I mention this from pique : far from it ; I assure you

you I should have rejoiced at your union, and would still rejoice, could I suppose it would take place. My delicacy may appear ridiculous and overstrained; yet were your fortune trifling to what it is, but your heart wholly devoted to me now, and ever had been, these objections would of course vanish." Here, from her wish of not offending him, she carried her complaisance a little too far.

"And would you, then, my beloved Charlotte," he replied, "accept a man ever devoted to you; in whose breast only yourself had the power of raising a flame as steady as it is bright, with a moderate, a very moderate, income; but whose study and pride it would ever be
to

to prove his gratitude for your condescension?"

"Oh yes," cried Charlotte, hastily, her eyes sparkling with animation, unsuspecting the deceit, and thinking indeed at that moment only of Mr. Littleton, whose idea had been strongly excited by his speech.

"Then," replied Godfrey, falling at her feet, "behold in me that man. It is you alone which drew me to B——; and the hope of securing you has led me to engage in a deception my soul would have otherwise abhorred; but in love and war, you know, all stratagems are fair." He then, to poor Charlotte's utter dismay and astonishment, recounted
the

the progress of his affection for her, the plan he had laid in consequence of having discovered his friend's foible, and its success; confessed his real name; swore he was only impelled by love for her; and, in short, related every circumstance with which the reader is already acquainted. "And now," cried he, his eyes sparkling with hope, "I claim your promise: be but mine, and assure yourself my whole life shall be devoted to your happiness."

Here he paused, and waited in silent expectation of an answer, which it was not immediately in her power to give, so amazed was she at this unexpected turn. A moment's deliberation was, however, sufficient to convince her, that, if what he now alleged was true, she

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might,

might, without fear, avow her prior engagement to Mr. Littleton: yet she scarcely knew how to depend upon a man, who thus openly boasted of a deception so treacherous, and practised upon a friend of so guileless, so benevolent a disposition, as he had represented Mr. Thornborough. She therefore determined to use a little dissimulation herself, and once more evade a direct answer, till our hero's return, and then learn from him the truth of this story, and unveil to him the whole mystery; for she felt no small share of mortification, that her family should have joined in making a dupe of him, and determined to discover the plot. Concealing, however, from these motives, the generous indignation she felt, as well as possible, she

she told Mr. Godfrey, with a deceitful smile, he had indeed betrayed her; but that she must take a few days to consider on what he had said. Extremely well pleased with this answer, he soon after took leave, promising to tease her no more upon the subject, till the day she had herself fixed.

In the mean time she anxiously waited our hero's return; and arriving from their country visit a short time after his message had been received, she resolved the next day to reveal the whole, if she could contrive any method of sending Mr. Godfrey out of the way. A woman's wit is seldom at a loss to effect any purpose, the execution of which she is solicitous for: but whilst they were at supper she was

spared this trouble, by her father's asking him if he had any objection to ride over with him early the next morning to Ravenhurst, as he wished to see sir James Wilmot, on business relative to an approaching election.

Mr. Godfrey consented; and the instant Charlotte saw them set off from the door, she dispatched a note she had previously written to Mr. Thornborough, desiring he would meet her at twelve o'clock, and before he visited her sister, at Mrs. Irwine's, as she had some intelligence to impart, of the utmost consequence both to him and herself. Having received an answer that he would be punctual, she went to the above-mentioned lady, who was an intimate friend,
and

and to whom she imparted the whole affair, and her intended conduct; and meeting with her approbation, she waited his arrival with less dread, though with extreme agitation.

Exactly at twelve he entered the room; and, Mrs. Irwine quitting it, Charlotte attempted to speak, but burst into tears. Surprised at this, he tenderly enquired the cause, and attempted to sooth her. When a little recovered, she asked him, in a tremulous voice, if he knew Mr. Robert Littleton.

“You alarm me,” cried he; “he is my dearest friend. Tell me, have you heard any intelligence of him that will shock me? Is he well?”

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“He is well, I believe; at least I know nothing to the contrary. But now, sir, that I am satisfied on this point, before I utter a syllable of my reasons for desiring this meeting, you must promise me, solemnly promise me, by no means, directly or indirectly, to seek revenge upon one who is beneath your notice, nor put your valuable life in competition with that of a villain. Promise me this, and I will unfold a strange and dark story.”

“Charlotte!” replied our hero, with a voice and countenance in which grief, anger, and curiosity, were visibly blended, “you wound my very soul. Can Littleton, a man whom I have known for years—can he have acted basely by a friend,

friend, for whom he always professed a regard?"

"Oh no, indeed!" cried Charlotte, eagerly, shocked at this misconstruction of her words, which yet she was conscious of having given rise to; "Mr. Littleton is wholly unconcerned in the affair I speak of; and, to confess the truth, and at once to remove all your suspicions on that head, know, sir, we are engaged to each other by the strictest, the most inviolable ties."

Our hero then expressed his surprise that he had never before heard of this, and his extreme joy that his friend was unconcerned in the treachery she hint-

ed at; and then entreated her to proceed.

“When you have given me the required promise, I will, but never till then.”

After a short pause he consented, and swore, in the most serious manner, neither directly nor indirectly to seek an opportunity of revenge.

Charlotte then related the particulars, with which the reader is already acquainted; and when she had concluded her little narrative, requested him, if possible, to conceal from the world the disgraceful part her own family had acted,

acted, and not to embroil her with them, as the informer.

Mr. Thornborough was so struck with astonishment and horror, at this proof of the baseness of a young man whom he had believed sincerely attached to him, that for some minutes he could not speak at all; but when he had regained sufficient composure, he replied—

“ Depend on it, miss Charlotte, if it is in my power, for your sake, for my own sake, I will not reveal the part your family have taken; nor will I, by any means, discover my informer; nor will I forfeit my word; though, if Godfrey is not a scoundrel, he will himself give me satisfaction: and should he, averse as I

L 5

have

have ever been to the practice of duelling, I cannot say I could command my temper sufficiently to avoid it. Cruelly as I must be hurt at the discovery of such base conduct, yet forgive me if I add, with respect to your sister, I feel more resentment than regret; as I have lately discovered my passion for her was not what I once fancied it; and I have severely condemned myself for thus hastily forming an engagement, which though I intended to fulfil, I knew I should ever repent. I will write her a letter, as soon as I return home, to acquaint her I am not ignorant of her arts: but to you I will acknowledge, though to her I dare not, that I consider the promise I was fatally drawn in to give, so far binding, that whilst she remains single I will not
give

give my hand to another ; though, if I loved her as well, or ten thousand times better than I even once imagined, the world should not tempt me to unite my fate with a woman capable of such deceit. But I entreat you, Charlotte, tell her not this determination, for all my hopes of happiness now depend upon her marriage ; for if she knew herself a tie upon me, she might remain single, from a hope, though it would be a vain one, of inducing me to renew my addresses. The same motive will keep me silent with respect to her conduct ; for who that knew her disposition would ever seek in her a companion to lessen the toil and fatigues of life ?”

Charlotte assured him of her discre-

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tion ;

tion; and, after some farther conversation on the subject, they parted; and our hero went home with a heart so much relieved by this discovery, that it greatly lessened his resentment; so impossible is it to harbour at once in the soul two such opposite passions as anger and joy.

Having ordered every thing for his departure, and paid off the lodgings, he told his own servant he should set off immediately; and to the others, who had belonged nominally to Godfrey, he gave two letters to deliver, which the reader will find in the following chapter; and then bade them follow him, as he was pretty sure their master would have no farther occasion for them.

C H A P. XVI.

TO MISS WILDING.

I F, madam, the signature of this should surprise you, as a premature avowal of my name and character, let your own conscience explain the enigma, and tell you that I have discovered, fortunately discovered, before it was too late for my happiness, that from the first of our acquaintance neither of them have been a secret to you; though, with all the parade and affectation of disinterested love, you have so artfully concealed the knowledge you previously obtained from one
who,

who, beneath the mask of friendship, played upon my foibles to obtain his own wishes. Whether he will succeed or not, is a point I shall not speak upon; neither shall I say how or when I received the information for which I am so highly indebted. Though your conduct, permit me to say, deserves no consideration; yet my respect for the female character, and my feelings for that part of your family who may have been innocently engaged in it, will induce me, if possible, to avoid making the story public, particularly in B——; as, however just, I do not wish to see the ridicule of the whole town fall on you. I wish you better success in your next negotiation; perhaps with less contrivance you may be more fortunate, but from me never expect to hear again.

Adieu,

Adieu, madam: it is something ungallant to say I rejoice in my liberty, yet it is the truth: I have long been weary of my chains, even when I thought the fair enslaver worthy my regard. I again repeat, I will not voluntarily disclose the reason of our separation, unless I am obliged to do it, from any undeserved stigma falling on the hitherto unimpeached character of

WILLIAM THORNBOROUGH.

TO LIEUTENANT GODFREY.

MY letter to miss Wilding will sufficiently account for my requesting you instantly to resign the name of Thornborough, to which you can do no honour. However my feelings are hurt, or
my

my resentment excited, I have solemnly promised not to seek revenge for your base and unprincipled conduct. I am thus fettered; but you, sir, are free: you cannot think I meanly wish to avoid you by my hasty departure; for give me leave to say, though it may seem like a boast, Mr. Thornborough cannot be concealed, unless he wishes to be so; and that I do not you may soon be convinced, as, by reassuming the name and character I have too long resigned, and again mixing with the world, my place of residence will be well known.

To the disappointment of your hopes, and the stings of your conscience, if any conscience you have, I leave you; they may prove the punishment due to your
arts,

arts, but which humanity has no right to inflict. Perhaps at some future time it may wound your feelings to reflect, that you have entirely lost the regard and the good opinion of one who, had your behaviour merited it, would at all times have been happy in proving himself

Your sincere friend,

WILLIAM THORNBOROUGH.

Mr. Thornborough, after delivering these letters to the servant, mounted his phaeton, and drove one stage that afternoon; when both himself and horses wanting rest, he determined to sleep at the inn.

In the mean time Charlotte Wilding returned home before her father and Mr.

Godfrey;

Godfrey; but her spirits were so agitated by her apprehensions of the event of the day, that she was really ill; and gladly availed herself of the head-ach, which was the consequence, to dine in her own chamber.

Just as the family had finished their dinner, the servants arrived in haste, and calling Mr. Godfrey out, gave him the letters; saying nothing farther, but that our hero was gone out of town in the phaeton; a circumstance which, having nothing uncommon in it, he paid no attention to; but taking the letters into the parlour, gave one to Letitia; saying, with a smile, "Your lover has, I find, again played truant; but here, I fancy, is his apology."

Miss

Miss Wilding received the letter with a smile, for she hoped it would account for his neglect, which had highly piqued her, as she had been in expectation of seeing him the whole morning : but, as she perused it, her countenance gradually altered, her features swelled with rage, anger, and mortification ; and the instant she had finished, no longer able to restrain or conceal her emotions, with passion she burst into tears, which increased till at length she was in an absolute hysteric fit.

Poor Charlotte trembled when she heard the confusion below ; as, though she had no doubt of Mr. Thornborough's secrecy, she recollected, what had not before occurred to her, that Mr. Godfrey

frey must be sensible the intelligence came from her, and of course expected every mark of resentment from her own family. But Mr. Godfrey, though the instant he had perused the letter he guessed in what manner our hero had heard of the plot, determined for his own sake to keep the secret; conscious he should incur the blame for revealing the truth to Charlotte, before Mr. Thornborough was actually married to Letitia.

When miss Wilding was enough recovered to allow the terrified parents to enquire the cause of this extreme distress, he shook his head, and giving them the letters, said their plan had been by some strange means discovered to his friend, though he could
not

not imagine how, unless he had heard any thing to give him suspicion during his journey; that, for his part, he was beyond measure disconcerted and mortified, and not a little that he must directly quit B——, and their amiable family in particular, as he could have now no hopes of succeeding with miss Charlotte; and, if he had, he did not suppose Mr. Wilding would stand to his bargain.

“No to be sure, I shall not,” was that gentleman’s answer; and Mr. Godfrey went on—

“Besides, as Mr. Thornborough means to take his own name again, I must here be discovered, and exposed to all
the

the ridicule of the town ; nor will you, sir, or your family be exempt : therefore take my advice ; hush up the matter here ; and tell the world, though your daughter was much attached, you thought Mr. Godfrey was not a proper match for Letitia, and that Charlotte refused Mr. Thornborough : thus will your credit be saved."

Mr. Wilding thought this advice very good, and determined to follow it. Mr. Godfrey then took leave, after endeavouring to console Letitia for her loss, and desiring his best and most respectful compliments to miss Charlotte. He then bade the servants follow him to his lodgings ; and finding Mr. Thornborough had discharged them, he ordered

ed the chariot; and, having a new plan of operations in his head, drove to a town about twenty miles north of B——: there he alighted at an inn, and calling the two men into the parlour, told them that the other gentleman and himself having changed names in a frolic, but the diversion being at an end, the real Mr. Thornborough was waiting their arrival in London, whom in future they must consider as their master, and who would pay them what wages was due; that he hoped they would use as much expedition as possible, without hurting the horses, as he might want the carriage; and added, that, by his express commands, they must not mention what he had told them to any one.

The

The men could scarcely at first give credit to this story, though they were very glad of the exchange, as our hero, even whilst in the character almost of a dependent, had on many occasions proved the generosity of his spirit : and the following morning they set out, leaving Mr. Godfrey to pursue his new scheme ; what that was the reader shall be informed in due time. Let us now return to B——.

When the bustle occasioned by the letters, and Letitia's consequent illness, was a little abated, Mrs. Wilding went up to Charlotte, to relate these strange events ; who, finding she had not been accused, resolved to keep her own counsel, and accordingly affected the greatest surprise,

surprise, whilst her mother was telling the story, and softening the part they had acted as much as possible. The separation of the lovers was soon circulated through the town, and various causes assigned; but the real reason did not yet transpire.—Here then for a while let us leave them in their usual state, and follow the steps of our hero, who proceeded towards London.

C H A P. XVII.

AS Mr. Thornborough travelled in the phaeton with his own horses, he made no great progress: and on the evening of the second day, alighting at the inn where he meant to sleep, he was surprised and pleased at seeing a footman of Mr. Barrymore's standing in the gateway; and, on enquiry, learned his master, lady, and miss Sophy, were then in the house, also on their road to London.

On sending in a message, he was immediately admitted, and they mutually rejoiced

rejoiced at this unexpected meeting. It was the first time he had seen miss Barrymore since the evening he played whist with her at Mrs. Burlington's. From all that had since passed, he thought himself justified in telling them the true story belonging to the child; and their surprise was extreme. They joined with him in accusing the unnatural mother; and they applauded the tenderness and delicacy of his conduct. Delighted by their approbation, and animated by the hint Mr. Nesbit had given him, and which he now fancied an expression in Sophia's eyes confirmed, he almost forgot the fatal tie which bound him, and resolved to acquaint them with his real name: but, just as he was going to begin, the entrance of a Mr. Western, who he

found occupied the fourth place in their coach, prevented him. As he hoped in town to have many opportunities of seeing them alone, and revealing this secret, without the risque of its being known all over B——, he therefore at present gave up the point with much cheerfulness; and after passing the pleasantest evening he had ever before known, and promising to travel their pace, and accompany them the whole way to London, he retired to rest, with a hope, though a very distant one, of obtaining, at some future time, the hand of the only woman he was now certain he had ever truly loved.

The next morning they met at breakfast, with the same cheerfulness and good humour; but when they were informed

formed the carriages were ready, and our hero had just handed in the object of his tenderest affections, he was told a person wanted to speak with him; and on going back was arrested, by the name of Godfrey, for the sum of five hundred pounds, at the suit of a Mr. Brackstone of London, in the sight of all the people, and the servants of Mr. Barrymore.

Extremely disconcerted at an event so mortifying, and which prevented him from the pleasure of attending Sophia to town; and still more hurt at the idea of appearing in her eyes in so disgraceful and so dishonourable a light, he could yet only blame his ridiculous folly, which had subjected him to this inconvenience;

for such only it was, as he knew his arrival in London would set this mistake right. He therefore submitted with a good grace; and bidding their servants tell Mr. and Mrs. Barrymore, with his compliments, that he was prevented from attending them in their journey, but hoped to wait on them in town, he went back to the parlour he had just quitted, with a composure that surprised them all.

It was before mentioned, that Mr. Godfrey's creditor had placed a spy upon his actions; and the fact was this: He wrote to Mr. Clayton, a second-rate attorney, at B——; and, relating the circumstances, put the affair into his hands, desiring, if the match went off, or Mr.
Godfrey

Godfrey attempted leaving the place, he would instantly arrest him. When our hero paid off his lodgings and set out, and his friend followed; their having left the town, and quitted the miss Wildings, though the reason was not guessed at, was all over the place by the next evening; and Mr. Clayton hearing of it at his club, was heartily vexed at having acquitted himself so ill to his client. He resolved therefore to pursue our hero, as knowing him only by the name of Godfrey, who, not wishing to be concealed, was easily traced to the Pelican at F——, and there arrested, as has been mentioned.

Mr. Thornborough, extremely eager to be again at liberty, ordered post-

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horses

horses to convey him to town, as the quickest method, and left his phaeton to follow. Mr. Clayton lifted up his hands and eyes at the extravagance of a young fellow already so deeply in debt. He however made no objection; and, on their arrival, our hero desired Mr. Brackstone might be instantly sent for: but, to his great disappointment, learned he had been gone out of town a week, and was not expected till Sunday night. This was only Thursday, and Mr. Thornborough's impatience to be released, that he might clear his character to the Barrymores, was so great, that he bore his confinement with less than his usual complacence. He might indeed have sent for either sir John Molefworth, or Mr. Conway, who were both in town: but
 he

he rather chose to wait Mr. Brackstone's return; as he could not apply to either of the others, without confessing his own folly, and relating events he wished buried in oblivion.

On the Sunday evening, the arrival of Mr. Brackstone set him once more at liberty. Instantly convinced of the mistake, he chid Mr. Clayton for the blunder: but our hero, with his usual sweetness, assured him it was a very natural one; for that gentleman and himself having changed names in a frolic, it was only by that of Godfrey he was known at B——. Mr. Brackstone then requested to know where the identical Mr. Godfrey was to be found. "I know not exactly," replied Mr. Thornborough;

borough; "I left him at B——: but as we have now resumed our own characters, I fancy he will not continue there long."

Mr. Brackstone thanked him with great earnestness for his intelligence, and they parted; Mr. Clayton, at our hero's earnest desire, promising not to mention at B—— the circumstance of the change of names; and Mr. Thornborough accompanying this request with a handsome present, ensured his compliance.

Early the next morning, according to the directions he received, he went to Berkley-square, and enquired for Mr. Barrymore. The house was shut up; one servant only was left in it, who informed

formed our hero, the family, two days after their arrival in town, received an express from the continent, to acquaint them with the dangerous state of sir Philip Barrymore's health; and that, in consequence of it, they had set out immediately for Dover, where they were to embark: and on their arrival at Paris, Mr. Charles Barrymore was to meet them, and attend miss Sophia to her father in one of the southern provinces. Whether her master and lady would return to England, she could not be certain; but she rather fancied they would stay in France till the recovery or death of sir Philip restored miss Barrymore to them.

Extremely chagrined and mortified at
this

this intelligence, which wholly destroyed all the plans he had formed, and, still more, threw the object of his love into the power of a dangerous rival, to whom it was said she was engaged, and who undoubtedly possessed every advantage of birth and fortune, and whose interest could not fail of being strengthened by the wishes and persuasions of her uncle and aunt, who, already tenderly attached, would assuredly endeavour to promote their union; and this happening at a time when he must appear in a most disgraceful light, exclusive of the apparent difference in their situations, which was alone sufficient to make her endeavour to forget him, even supposing her heart was a little inclined to regard him with partiality; he walked from Berkley-square, almost

almost distracted with his self-reproaches, and at the utter impossibility there now was of revealing to the Barrymores his real situation.

Whilst thus unpleasantly engaged, he accidentally met his old and respected friend Mr. Fitzwilliam, who addressed him with the utmost pleasure, and asked with a friendly concern why he looked so dejected, and where he had concealed himself for so many months.

To these enquiries our hero replied with a deep sigh, and shaking his head, "Ah, sir!" said he, "to your friendship I owe an account of myself for these last few months: but in truth I am ashamed to give it. You know how abruptly

abruptly I left the Abbey: but I did not then intend to make so long an absence, or you should have heard from me. You may well ask why I look dejected. I have trifled with my peace, and thrown away every hope of happiness. I have been duped by men, women, and children; have been deceived where most I trusted; and now, this moment, have met with a most cruel disappointment, in the only rational hope I ever formed."

"You astonish and terrify me," replied Mr. Fitzwilliam: "but, my young friend, we must not part thus. Go home with me; tell me all the difficulties you are involved in, and depend upon me

for endeavouring to extricate you from them."

"You are very kind, sir," answered our hero; "but I must be excused at present: Mrs. Fitzwilliam and miss Caroline—they have not been accustomed to see me thus, and I am unfit for society. To-morrow I will wait on you in your study, and then you shall hear all that has befallen me; and to your advice I submit my future conduct.

"My family," cried Mr. Fitzwilliam, "are absent; that excuse, therefore, will not avail: nor will I leave you, till I know how I can be serviceable to you."

Mr. Thornborough consented in
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silence;

silence; and, thanking him for these additional proofs of his friendship, accompanied him to Mortimer-street. Mr. Fitzwilliam then ordering himself to be denied, and leading the way to his library, our hero, at his request, began in the following manner.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.